THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

THE GREAT PIONEER FAMILY PAPER OF AMERICA.

Vol. 66. PUBLICATION OFFICE No. 734 SANSOM ST. PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, JANUARY 8, 1887. $1.00 A YEAR IN ADVANCE. FIVE CENTS A COPY. No. 26

DREAMLAND.

BY E. A. B.

Oh heavenly sleep! how sweet thy potent spell!
How bright the scenes in thine enchanted grove!
Our dearest wishes, hopes too fair to tell,
In thee are all fulfilled; all that we love,
All that we sigh for, in strange visions move
Before us, as thou wav'st thy starry wand,
And spreadst thy mighty sheltering wings above
Our weary heads, till, by thy plumage fanned,
We lose ourselves in bliss too sweet to understand.

We lose ourselves, but our freed spirits rise
To commune with the future and the past;
Into the sweet, long-vanished light of eyes
That were our Heaven on Earth we gaze, and cast
Doubt, sorrow to the winds. Oh joy! at last
To meet again, again to press the hand
Whose touch was rapture, and to hold it fast
For one blest moment, as our spirits stand
Communing face to face in that strange shadowland.

SISTER OR WIFE?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A BROKEN WEDDING RING," "THORNS AND BLOSSOMS," "WHICH LOVED HIM BEST?" ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER III—(CONTINUED.)

STUNG to the quick by her words, he removed his hand.

"Go, then!" he cried, as impulsively and passionately as she had spoken. "You whom I have loved—you whom I would have trusted as my own soul, you can think me so despicable a thing!"

He threw himself down upon the grass, hiding his face; Fern turned back, and went close to his side.

"Ernest." It was only a whisper, and although it thrilled through his whole frame he pretended not to hear. "Dear Ernest!"

That from the lips of the girl he loved was beyond mortal man to withstand. He raised himself, although rather slowly, and stood up.

"Yes?"

"I did not mean to be unjust. But you can't think how miserable I have been, with Swift away in India and you never coming near me, even though you were close at hand."

"I did not think you would care, or that you wanted me," he muttered, looking with softened eyes into the pleading upturned face.

"Not want you? Why, what have I done that you should get such an idea into your head?"—with an expression of genuine astonishment.

"Nothing. It was not your fault," he answered half sullenly.

"And now—do please inform me why I have not been better treated by my guardian. Swift told me in his very first letter that I was to consider myself in your charge!"

"Oh, so you know about that already, do you? That is one of the things I meant to say to you myself to-day."

Fern laughed.

"Why, of course I heard of it long ago. He said that he should be twice as happy now that he could feel my brother was looking after me. And yet"—half playfully—"my brother has never been near me, Ernest!"

It was his turn now to stamp, and he did it vigorously.

"That's just it. That's exactly the point, Fern, only of course you don't understand. I never can be your brother any more."

An angry cloud passed over her bright face again.

"No, because you are an Earl. Oh, I understood that long ago! Why didn't you let me go before, Lord Somerton? Every time you talk like that you hurt me more. I never could have supposed that riches and a title would have spoiled you in this way. And when I used to love you so dearly!"

The tears were falling down her face like rain, and the sight of these drops worked more mischief than she could have guessed, for they unclosed Ernest's lips.

"I cannot bear it, Fern. Oh, stop crying, dear, do! I will tell you, and then at least you will not be able to think me the hateful being you do at present."

She dried her eyes and looked up, startled at his tone.

"I love you, Fern—that is why I have kept away from you," he almost whispered in his agitation; "not like a sister—would to Heaven that I could!—but as something very different. Ah, Fern you are Swift's promised wife, and I could almost find it in my heart to hate him, my dear old friend, because you care so much for him!"

Whilst she listened all the pretty rose color died away from her cheeks. She did not blush or look confused. It was almost a divine pity that seemed to beam from her eyes as she laid her hand upon his arm.

"I am so sorry. Forgive me, Ernest!"

"You could not help it," he answered, turning away his face so that she should not see it. "I am sure you did not know, only I thought you could at least have trusted me." There was a pause then. He glanced towards her again, and went on—"I must not keep you, dear. Such words from me to you mean that I must never try to see you again. At any rate now you know the reason why I could not bear to be with you; and you will not put it down to want of love, Fern!"

She shook her head.

"Oh, I am so sorry!" she sighed again. "I should not have compelled you to give any explanation. I ought to have been able to trust you after all these years."

"Yes, I think you ought," he agreed with a very sad sweet smile.

"And now I'll go."

"You shall in a minute. But there is something I want first to beg you to do for me, Fern. Will you do it.

"Of course—at least if I can," she added prudently.

"I want you to write to Swift and ask him to come back at once to marry you!"

"Ernest!"

"Well?"

Then noticing her blushes as well as the surprised look in her eyes, he laughed a little.

"Oh you need not suggest the latter part, you know, if you would rather not! You can leave that to him," he said, half bitterly, half amused, even in the midst of his pain. "But at least tell him that you wish him to return."

"But why? How can he do so without the money?" she asked naively.

"He ought never to have gone. I did beg him to remain at the last moment, when the telegram reached me; but he would not. Now he will be tired of staying away and will be glad enough to come home and to you."

"And live on your fortune?"

"Fern, don't! What greater joy could I have than to know that my money had made you and him happy for life? That is what I meant this morning when I told you that I had something to say to you."

"I could not do it!" she declared decidedly.

"Not for his good?"

"I don't think it would be for his good, Ernest; that's just the thing. Because, you see, I never could consent to be——"

"His wife. Don't be afraid of saying it, Fern. I am not quite a coward."

She nodded,

"No, I couldn't," she went on incoherently; "and feel all the time that it was your doing, you know—especially——"

"Especially after what I have said this afternoon. Is that what you mean?" he asked, in a sterner tone than she had ever before heard him use.

But she answered bravely enough—

"Yes, that is it. Besides, I could never care for a man who would consent to such an arrangement!" she finished, with spirit.

"I suppose you are right," he admitted, after a moment. "But, Fern, strange as it may sound, I would give anything to know that you were really married. Then perhaps I might get over it. But as it is——" He shrugged his shoulders, and added—"So you see my request was not altogether an unselfish one."

"I would do anything for you but that," she murmured plaintively, raising her eyes, full of wistful sisterly love, to his.

"I know, dear—I know! And, Fern, if it will make you happier to hear me say so, I cannot help believing that you are right," he admitted generously.

"Thank you, Ernest. I was sure that you would understand." Then, with a change of tone—"But see how dark it is getting, and I am so cold! The days are growing dreadfully short now, for it can't be very late. I must run. Good-bye!"

"But you will let me go with you to the gate?"

"I think not," she said, after an instant of hesitation. "I know my way, and I would rather say good-bye here."

Without another word he yielded.

"Good-bye, then, Fern!" he murmured, grasping once again both her hands and gazing into her face with all his soul in his eyes.

He watched her make her way quickly across the grass with far different feelings from those with which he had seen her come. He knew it was for the last time. He knew that he must never again venture to look upon her if he intended to keep the truth committed to him. For he had dared to tell her that he loved her, and they could never more meet as brother and sister.

"Fool—fool that I was! She might have recalled Swift in spite of everything if I had but held my tongue," he muttered, just as she passed round a clump of laurels and was hidden from his sight.

Then he rose from the bench on which he had been sitting and took a few steps in the direction of his own large lonely house, which was to him so utterly unlike home. Suddenly, however he was arrested by a succession of sharp shrill shrieks in Fern's voice. Without the pause of a moment he rushed in the direction which she had taken, the screams still sounding clearly enough to guide him, although apparently there was something being pressed against her lips, perhaps to stifle her—or so in his excitement he imagined.

That fear almost lent him wings. In less than a minute after he had heard the first cry he came within sight of her, standing at a little distance, in the grasp of a man. So far as Lord Somerton could make out in the waning light he seemed to have passed one arm round the girl's head and over her mouth, whilst with the disengaged hand he was busily rifling her pocket.

But as the Earl came nearer, the ruffian, making a final snatch at the thin gold chain about her neck, released her and made off.

"Oh, quick, quick, Ernest!" she gasped, as he at last reached her. "He has the locket that Swift gave me the morning he went away! Pray, pray get it back!"

And then she fell exhausted upon the ground. The robber who was not particularly agile in his movements, was yet in view. In another instant he was in the young man's hold, firmly secured by the collar.

"Give up the locket you scoundrel," Ernest shouted, "or I'll break every bone in your body!"

The man raised his hand and flung something which he had been holding to a distance. But it gleamed brightly as it flew through the air, and the Earl felt satisfied.

"Ah, let me off, good kind sare! Pray, please, let me go away," pleaded the man, in broken English. "I did not 'urt the demoiselle, only frightened her. And I was so 'ongry."

"What brought you into the park at all, eh? Tell me that!" inquired the Earl, shaking him backwards and forwards in his strong grasp.

"Ah, sare, the grass did look so nice and soft, and I have travelled so far—so very far! Do not send me to prison, good sare, I beg of you," the man went on. "I will never do bad things not no more. I will run away from this country altogether. Only, kind sare let me go."

By this time Fern, having recovered her breath and courage, had come up.

"Yes, Ernest, let him off—do!" she pleaded, "I dare say the poor creature is sorry now. Besides, it would be odious to have to go and tell it all in a police-court, you know!"

Lord Somerton hesitated. It scarcely seemed wise or right to set such a vagabond loose upon society at large. Yet to prosecute the man would perhaps be more trouble than it was worth, and a great bore for Fern into the bargain. At that point his fingers began to relax.

"There—get away with you then!" he said, with a contemptuous half-laugh, and giving the man a push in the direction of the gate.

The foreigner, being unprepared for the movement, stumbled and went down upon his nose. But in an instant he was up and facing them, with a hand thrust into the breast of his tightly buttoned frock-coat.

"You throw me down," he shrieked wildly, absolutely dancing with rage—"you throw me down, you dog of an Englishman, you! Take that!"

There was the flash of steel in the air. Ernest rushed at him, trying to seize the upraised arm. But, rendered nimble by his anger, his assailant was too quick for him. In another moment the dagger was buried in the Earl's side, and with a groan he staggered backwards and fell to the ground. His adversary immediately took to his heels, and was soon out of sight.

Fortunately for both Fern and Lord Somerton her previous screams had been carried far upon the quiet evening air, and a party of frightened servants were hovering about close by. Now the cries, more piercing than ever, burst out again, and guided them to the spot.

There lay their new master, extended upon the grass in the middle of his own park. His face was colorless, his eyes were closed, and from the wound made by the foreigner the blood was pouring. Fern Meynell, almost beside herself with fear and horror, stood by him, shrieking ceaselessly.

Stanching the bleeding as best they might, they carried him to the house. The girl had stopped her cries at the approach of the domestics, and had even given what aid she could in applying the rough bandages. Then, with her long hair streaming all about her, her hat off and her pretty dress soaked with the blood in which she had knelt to tend him, she followed the group almost mechanically to the Castle.

CHAPTER IV.

"Mrs. Levick!"

"Yes, my dear."

"I want you to tell me, please, exactly what the doctor thinks of me."

It was a very faint low voice that utter

the request just as all the clocks in the house were striking the hour at midnight; and the old lady sitting beside the bed was obliged to turn away her head and dry her tears before she could even try to answer. Then she let her gentle gaze rest on him lovingly.

"They say that you are very much injured, my darling boy."

The Earl of Somerset would never be anything but a boy to the only mother he had ever known during his orphaned life. He smiled faintly at her now.

"I could have informed them of that," he murmured almost playfully, although each word fell slowly from his pallid lips. "But you know, and so do I, that that wasn't all. Let me hear the truth, please." Then, as she hesitated—"Don't be afraid; I can bear it, whatever it may be."

But she could not bring it upon herself to repeat the doctors verdict. And for all answer Mrs. Levick hid her face in her pocket-handkerchief, laying her cool, soft palm upon his feverish hand.

"Then I am dying?"

He breathed rather than spoke the words which meant so much to him. But she heard them, and bowed her head still lower. Then there was a solemn pause for a moment or two, until by-and-by she rose to hold to his lips a cup which stood near. As she put it down again the Earl inquired—

"Is the Vicar here?"

"Yes. Do you want him. I can call him in a moment."

"If it would not be troubling you and him too much," he said, raising his wistful eyes to her face and stirring a little in his restless weariness. Then his eyelids sank and he seemed to doze. When he opened his eyes again the clergyman stood by him.

"Are we alone," questioned the sufferer eagerly.

"Yes, quite. What can I do for you, my boy?"

"Will you promise to do it?" Oh, it is something that I want above anything I can express!" the earl said, rousing himself and speaking with more energy than he had yet shown since the moment when he had been carried, wounded and bleeding, from the park, and laid upon his own bed.

"Willingly—anything!" returned Mr. Levick warmly.

"Then will you give your consent to my marriage with Fern?"

"Ernest!"

The exclamation burst unchecked from his lips, sounding strangely loud in the hush of the sick-room. But he was startled. He believed his old pupil must be delirious to make such a request.

However, in a moment he was reassured, for his companion understood his thought, and smiled a little.

"Don't be frightened," he said; "indeed, I am no worse, and I don't forget she is engaged to Swift either. Please don't think I want to wrong him, but it is certain, as you have heard of course, that I cannot get over this."

"Hush, hush!" the clergyman exclaimed, shocked at the knowledge which he thought should have been kept from him.

But Lord Somerton shook his head.

"No; I must talk while I can. I shan't be able long, and, after all, life is very sweet"—with a weary sigh. "Still I have had troubles. Perhaps you did not know—but I did love her so; and you see I mean to leave her all my money. Don't think I say it as a bribe, Mr. Levick; it will all be hers anyway. But I could die happy," he exclaimed, suddenly gathering all his strength and speaking with a vehemence that alarmed the other, "if I know that she had borne my name and been my wife but for a few hours."

The tears stood in his old tutor's eyes.

"Poor boy," he said regretfully. "I have been afraid of this for years."

A faintness came over Lord Somerton then. He sank back upon the pillows, from which in his excitement he had raised his head, and his voice seemed to die away.

"I can't—say any more. If you don't—think—it's wrong—please ask her. Tell her—she can only—be mine—in name."

And then he became so exhausted that nurses and doctors were summoned back with all speed to his side.

Only as the clergyman was leaving the room, Ernest unclosed his parched lips to whisper—

"Will you?"

And for answer Swift's father uttered but one word—

"Yes."

The hardest part of his task lay immediately at hand. For Fern was still in the house, which indeed, in her passion of horror and of really causeless remorse, she had refused to leave until she could hear better tidings of the Earl.

So the Vicar on his first arrival had sent down to the Cottage for her father and step-mother, both of whom had come at once, and who were in the library with her still.

When Mr. Levick opened the door it was to find Fern lying upon the sofa, with her head buried in the cushions, Mr. Meynell fast asleep, and giving forth loud nasal music from the coziest arm-chair available, and his wife sitting placidly knitting, in the warmest corner by the fire.

It looked an odd little company, each wrapped in solitude and silence, though all so near together. And to them came the Vicar upon his strange mission.

"Fern, my dear," he said, going close to the sofa, and laying his hand gently upon her arm.

She started up, showing a face from which all trace of color had departed.

"Is he dead?" she gasped, seizing the clergyman's hand in a grip that made him wince.

"No, no, child; you must not be so nervous. He is a little better at present, if anything. But he has sent me on an errand to you."

Fern had sunk back again in her relief. Now she roused herself once more.

"What is it?" she asked quickly.

"He wants to marry you, Fern."

"Good gracious me!"

It was Mrs. Meynell who uttered these words. She at once put down her knitting-needles, and prepared to devote her whole attention to the business in hand.

As though there was some awakening spell in the gently-spoken sentence, even the slumbering, snoring Mr. Meynell sat bolt upright, shaking himself, and blinking and rubbing his eyes.

"Dear me, I believe I must have been half asleep!" he exclaimed during the progress of these operations. "I declare I hardly caught what you said, Levick. Who wants to marry Fern, do you say?"

But no one paid the slightest attention to him.

The Vicar was occupied in watching the effect of his announcement upon Fern. As to the girl herself, she simply stared at him.

"To marry me?" she echoed stupidly, as though not understanding the words.

"Yes. He is dying, you know, dear," the clergyman went on very sadly and persuasively. "He will not in any way come between you and my boy. But he wants to leave you all his money, and he has a fancy to give you his name as well."

"Oh, I couldn't!" Fern exclaimed, clasping her hands and looking up into the Vicar's face. "Mr. Levick, you must yourself see that I couldn't. What would Swift say?"

"I will appease Swift," he returned, with a half-smile. "My dear," he added, "I would not on any account press you to do this did I believe that it would interfere with Swift's welfare or your own. But he could not possibly object, in the very peculiar circumstances, and——"

At this point her father broke in.

"Pardon me, Levick, but it seems to me that there is another and a totally different consideration from any of those which you have mentioned. Fern my child, the Earl has received his death-blow in your defence, I think that in return you can do no less than this which he asks. And, after all, what is it? Positively nothing more than saying a few words and changing your name!"

They were all against her—that was clear. And the girl sank back helplessly among her cushions, covering her face with her hands. There was silence in the room for many minutes. Then Mr. Levick asked abruptly—

"Well Fern, and what is your answer to me?"

"No. I cannot say anything else. Oh, I could not bear it! Pray, pray don't try to persuade me."

"There! And that after all your protestations of affection for your brother, as you used to call him!" burst out Mrs. Meynell suddenly, overcome with a fear that, after that, after having been so near it, she might even yet miss being step-mother to a Countess. "I declare I'm ashamed of you. I thought better of you, Fern—I really did. And such a mere trifle too, to make all this fuss about."

The girl stood up, showing all the dark terrible stain upon the front of her dress. As it caught her eye she shuddered.

"I can't; and it isn't a mere trifle," she retorted, looking round her at the three anxious faces. Then, speaking very fast and with the blood rushing hotly into her cheeks—"Don't you see—can't you understand how it would make me feel? If I were to marry Ernest, as you all seem to wish, how could I ever hope he would get better?"

There was a pause, broken by Mrs. Levick's entrance.

"Fern; my dear," she exclaimed hurriedly, glancing about her rather blindly, for the light was dim. Then, as she saw the girl—"Ah, I want you! Will you come with me to Ernest at once?"

Fern turned pale again, and shrank back for an instant. Then, overcoming her terror with a perceptible effort, she slowly and timidly followed the lady. Outside the door Mrs. Levick stopped.

"Fern, my dear," she whispered, laying her hand upon the girl's shoulder, "I guess what it is he will ask you. Don't refuse him, my child. It can do neither Swift nor you any harm, and this poor boy's hours are so few!"

"Is he really dying then?" the girl murmured softly, only desirous to know, and without a thought in the matter.

And Mrs. Levick understood, for she answered tenderly enough—

"He is, darling. Don't you be the one to pain him, dear, during the short time he has left. It is an odd thing for him to desire this marriage so much; but, ah, Fern, if you could have heard the way he has been talking of it to me, you would not hesitate. Poor lad—I love him almost as well as if he were my own."

They were at the top of the staircase by this time.

She led Fern straight into the Earl's room, and stood beside her as she gazed down into the weary pale face upon the pillows.

Then, as he did not move, the girl laid her fingers upon the poor hot hand outside the sheet. At the touch the young man opened his eyes and smiled at her.

"Forgive me for sending for you, but I could not wait, dear," he said, so softly that she had to stoop in order to catch the words. "They say I ought to sleep, and I shall be so glad to do it when I know. Mr. Levick"—for the Vicar had followed the two women in—"have you asked her, and will she do it for me?"

And as she looked at him, prostrate there, with his eyes so dim and yet so full of love for her, Fern suddenly gave way.

"Yes, Ernest, anything to please you!" was her agitated answer.

In five minutes more, the Earl having whispered some directions in the Vicar's ear, was fast asleep.

It was a strange ceremony that within twelve hours took place in that same darkened chamber.

The wounded man had awakened in some measure refreshed by his sleep. The doctors, of whom two were staying in the house to watch the case, looked surprised as they felt his pulse.

"He is better," they said, when Mrs. Levick asked their opinion.

When the lawyer arrived Fern's lover gave him his instructions in some half-dozen words.

Afterwards he glanced around the room, and whispered—

"Flowers."

Mr. Meynell led in the trembling frightened bride. She wore a plain white cotton dress, the simplicity of which had provoked many lamentations from her step-mother; at her throat upon a white ribbon hung the locket which had been the cause of all these events, and in hunting for which amongst the shrubs and grass Mr. Meynell had spent the entire morning.

But as the little party entered the bed-chamber, odorous with the blossoms which Ernest had desired, all such trifles seemed to melt away from the consciousness of the most careless.

It was an awful thing they were about to do, in giving this unwilling, shrinking girl, already betrothed to another, to be the bride of the dying Earl. Surely never had there been such a marriage.

The man whispered his responses almost inaudibly, in his weakness; the woman, overcome with a vague unreasoning terror, spoke as softly; and the Vicar's words were almost choked with genuine emotion.

It was he who pressed the ring, which the Earl was too weak to hold, upon the slender finger of his son's promised wife. It was he who raised the feeble hand and laid it in hers, all glowing with life and youth. And then his voice clear and distinct upon the solemn silence, ordaining that—

"Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Thus the deed was done.

"Kiss me, dear," entreated the husband, when at last the register had been signed and the books taken away.

And obediently, for the first time since her childhood, she pressed his lips in happiness he fell asleep again, whilst Mrs. Levick led away the Countess of Somerton, followed by the few spectators.

Amongst these had been included one of the doctors who had arrived from London. He of course knew nothing of the real state of affairs, and interpreted entirely in his own way the profound dejection of the bride and the deep thankful calm of the bridegroom. With the rest he left the sick-room. Then, as they stood in a group upon the landing, he said, addressing Fern—

"I have something to tell your ladyship, if you could give me a moment."

Fern, who was absorbed in her own sad thoughts, altogether failed to recognise herself under that title. But, with an exultant laugh which jarred strangely upon every person present, Mrs. Meynell brought her to her senses.

"Fern," she cried—"Fern, doesn't your ladyship hear yourself addressed?"

The doctor scarcely had time to repress a smile before the newly-made Countess turned to him.

"I beg your pardon," she said, with a certain grave dignity. "I did not understand. Did you say you wished to speak to me?"

"Yes, if you will allow me a minute or two. Come into the library if you will be good enough, Lady Somerton. It is good news which I have for you."

She shook her head.

"Nothing can seem very good to me now," she responded, realising vaguely that to her the Earl's life or death meant but differing degrees of sorrow. But she led the way to the room, followed by all the rest. "What is it?" she asked, rather faintly, leaning one open hand upon the table, to steady herself.

"I have to inform your ladyship that we have every hope now that his lordship will recover. Probably your ready compliance with his wishes has saved him."

There was a dead silence, during which every eye turned upon the young wife. For an instant she tottered and seemed about to fall. Her father started forward to her help, but in a moment she recovered herself and motioned him away.

"Does he know?" she inquired in the even, steady voice of the physician.

"No. We dared not have said so much until about an hour ago, Lady Somerton; and then we feared to unnerve him just when he was needing all his strength. Now however my colleagues and myself are of one opinion, and of course it will be well to give him some idea of the happy change in his condition at the earliest possible moment. In point of fact"—turning his eyes reproachfully upon Mrs. Levick—"he ought never to have been made acquainted with our fears."

The long-winded speech had given Fern time to collect her thoughts and energies. Ever since the terrible scene in the park she had seemed to herself to be thinking and speaking in a dream. But now everything became plain to her. She was terribly pale by the time the doctor paused, and her lips were tightly compressed with suffering. But her resolution was taken.

"If you wish your patient to get well, Doctor Hughes," she said, "do not tell him of your hopes."

"Madam!"—in a tone of astonishment.

"I mean what I say," the girl returned calmly and impressively. Then, suddenly and utterly breaking down, she sank into a chair which had been pushed closed behind her. "Make him understand," she cried, in the midst of her awful tearless sobs; "I can't say it."

And the Vicar, with great tears rolling down his cheeks, exclaimed—

"She married him only to satisfy a dying man's fancy. She was to have been my son's wife!"

And so it was that the Earl of Somerton, each hour growing stronger and taking a firmer grasp of life, lay upon his bed expecting and waiting for death.

CHAPTER V.

DURING those days, Fern; repressing the feelings which would otherwise have absorbed her, and which were more of bewilderment even than of pain, was almost continually at the Earl's bedside.

"You are very good to me; my darling wife. I shall not trouble you now much longer," he murmured one night when he felt particularly feverish and depressed.

She stooped over him and kissed his forehead lightly.

"Hush, dear Ernest! Get well for my sake," she whispered back, for the moment unconscious of what her words really meant, and longing only to have her brother at her side again as of old.

But even when she was alone and realised what she said she could not find it in her heart to wish him dead. How was it possible to wish for the death of the man whom she had known and loved in her sisterly heart for so many long years?

Yet every night her pillow was wet with tears brought by thoughts of Swift, and the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Levick were often wrung as they saw her growing paler and sadder for love of the distant son who would himself, they believed, be heartbroken at the loss of her.

But this state of things could not go on for ever, and it was not very long, after all before Lord Somerton himself began to have some idea of the truth.

His nights were becoming less feverish and freer from pain, he grew able to lift his hand to his head, and even sometimes to enjoy the dainty food they brought him.

Could this be death?

Still for a day or two after he had begun to take in the fact that it was not death at all, but rather returning life, he could not ask of any one the question.

He felt that he dare not know. It was not until one morning when the London doctors were expected that he made up his mind.

He could bear the suspense no longer. Besides, he felt strong enough to face it then.

"How am I?" he enquired wearisomely enough, after his wound had been examined, and he was again at peace.

"Better—decidedly better," answered one of them quickly. "Yours will be one of the most marvellous cures on record, my lord."

"Ah! Then you think I shall recover, do you?"

"Oh, undoubtedly, if all goes on as well as it has been doing hitherto."

And then they took their leave.

It was only what he had anticipated. And how could the assurance of renewed life but bring hope and happiness to so young a man?

Yet, for a long time after they had gone he lay still, with his eyes closed. His attendants thought that he was asleep.

By-and-by, however, there came to him the scent of flowers, and he looked up. Fern, wearing a pretty dark cloth dress, with white waistcoat and cuffs, and holding a great basket of lovely chrysanthemums and ferns, was standing there at his side.

"Awake, dear?" she inquired with a smile, bending down rather hurriedly to bestow the morning kiss that she never refused her husband.

But he had caught a glimpse of the unutterably melancholy expression in her eyes before she had managed to hide it from him.

"I have not been asleep. I was thinking," he returned moodily.

"But that is the very worst thing you can do just now, as you very well know. Eat, drink, and sleep, that's your life for the present. And really, take it all around, not altogether a difficult life either," responded the girl playfully, moving about the room in her brisk light way, putting here and there a thing into place, clearing up the litter of medicine bottles and glasses, and finally filling a big old china punch-bowl, which always stood upon the broad window-sill, with water for her flowers.

Then she carried it carefully to the little table by his side, and sat down to arrange the blossoms just where he could most easily watch her movements. That she knew would be what he would like best.

"I've been making acquaintance with the gardener, Ernest. What a nice old Scotchman he is! He has sent pots half his plants to give me these. I told him I wanted something specially nice for you to-day. Next time he promises me roses. Fancy, in November!"

He did not speak, and after a little pause she went on with her chatter. But, in spite of her merry tones, his silence made her uncomfortable.

Did he guess?

"A pink, and a white, and a terra-cotta. How well these shades do mix! See"—holding up a cluster for his admiration—"and here are two red ones upon one stalk. And such beauties too! That's one for you to have here by your hand"—touching him with it gently, then laying it down upon the sheet—"and the other is for me to fasten in my brooch"—suiting the action to the word.

But instead of a smile he only replied with something like a groan.

"What is it, Ernest? Are you worse, dear? Can I get you anything?"—dropping all her flowers, and standing up to look anxiously at him.

He gazed back into her watchful eyes, his own grown so large and wistful with pain that they made his wife's heart ache painfully.

"No, love; nothing, thank you. I am no worse indeed. Then, lowering both his voice and his glance, as if he were ashamed, he added half to himself—"I'm better."

She started a little. It was as she had feared then.

But Fern did not lose her presence of mind.

"Oh! So you've found it out at last, have you?" she said as gaily as she could, and even with a smile upon her lips.

"Oh, Fern!" he cried, "do you know? Have you guessed already? And, if so, why are you so kind? You cannot help hating me."

"I heard it was so five minutes after our wedding, Ernest."

He moved restlessly about in his misery, so violently as to alarm her.

"Then you've just been so kind in order to soothe me? Oh, I know how good you are, Fern! You could do it if you thought it would make me better, even though you did detest me in your soul."

"Hush, dear: keep still, pray, or indeed I must go and leave you. You will disturb all your bandages and make yourself ill again," she remonstrated putting her cool hand upon his forehead and stroking back the damp heavy hair.

"Oh, I wish I could! I wish I could! How can I be so worthless a creature as to get well after marrying you like this? It was all humbug and false pretences. You can't help thinking so, Fern."

Even Fern could not help laughing, sorrowful as she felt.

"You absurd man!" she cried. "Thank goodness you can't help getting well either! And that's true, which your speech wasn't. The wisest thing you can do is to get over your illness as quick as you can."

In trying to comfort him she really did forget for the moment the pain deep down in her own heart.

"Are we all alone?"

"Quite, dear."

"Then I can speak. Oh, darling, will you ever be able to forgive me for what I have done? Indeed, indeed, I did not know at the time, Fern."

In spite of all her efforts the tears were by this time dropping slowly from her downcast eyes upon the quilt.

"That I am quite sure about it," she murmured.

"I will try not to get better. Indeed, indeed I will, Fern. I would kill myself to get out of your way, if only I didn't think that even more wicked than keeping alive."

Notwithstanding her still falling tears, Fern laughed again. It was all such a complication. Still, come what might, she was positive that she could never really be sorry that this brother of hers, who was yet her husband, was not dead.

"Your scruples upon the point are the greatest possible comfort to me, I assure you," she told him, drying her wet cheeks. "But do you think we had better talk any longer about it to-day? It seems to me that you are getting a good deal more excited than the doctor would approve."

"I can't be quiet," he went on energetically. "I shall only be worse if I hold my tongue, Fern, and that's the truth. And yet I scarcely really know what there is to say, except that I loathe myself more than you can possibly do."

"Poor boy."

"Oh, my dear, to think of it!" he continued, moving his hand about to try to find hers, seeing which she slipped her fingers into his grasp. "All your dear life spoilt, for me. And Swift's heart broken—Swift, whom I love almost next to you! And then that I can never undo it!

She shook her head a little, mournfully enough. Had not that been the burden of her own cry for many long weary days and nights? But she did not tell him that. She only asked—

"May I write and tell him just how it come about? I could not do that without your leave Ernest. I'm afraid he will be surprised, though, that there has been no letter for him for a whole fortnight. I begged every one else to wait until I could write too."

"Why did you not write before?"

Her eyes fell beneath his.

"You are my husband now, Ernest, however that may have come about. And if, for this once, I write to Swift as I want"—a pause, broken by a hard, tearless sob—"I may say things which perhaps a married woman——Oh, Ernest!"

For a moment she went on sobbing hysterically. Then with a great effort she controlled herself.

"Say what you like to him, my dear," he answered, as soon as she could listen.

Then there was a long silence.

"Never mind," she cried at last, shaking herself a little and giving a deep sigh in her struggle to throw off her burden; "we must try to make each other as happy as we can Ernest."

"There's no fear of me," he returned. "To know you are my wife is enough. Oh, Fern, how I do love you!" He drew her fingers to his lips and caressed them tenderly as he went on talking. "Your grief is a punishment to me for having had my mind so full of earthly things just when I believed I was going to leave them all. For the trouble falls upon you, my dear—upon you and Swift!"

She caught her breath as though he had touched a wound.

"Don't Ernest!" The man shivered. "But, oh, do believe me that I do not want you to die!" she added eagerly. "I love you. How can I help loving my brother, even——"

She stopped abruptly.

"Even though he is your husband? Even though he must—yes must," he repeated agitatedly—"keep you from the man you love still better? Oh, it is bitterly hard for you, my pet."

For she had dropped her head upon her hands again, and was shaking from head to foot.

It was his turn now to console her.

"Hush, my dear! Hush, my love," he whispered pressing his fingers upon hers. Then, more softly still, he went on—"and, Fern, may I say it? It is what I wanted to let you know. Though I cannot help now keeping you from him, still you shall not lose your brother as well."

She raised her face and looked down at him.

"What do you mean?" she asked him slowly.

He flushed beneath the clear gaze of her innocent eyes; but he spoke steadily enough.

"That you shall be to me as a sister, dear, forever if you like, even though you are the Countess of Somerton," he answered.

And at that moment, Mrs. Levick came in, and laying her motherly hand on his burning, aching forehead, sent the young wife away in disgrace for having allowed the patient to talk so much.

But though he was worse again for a few hours, upon the whole Lord Somerton's convalescence progressed quickly and surely.

* * * * *

That same day was, oddly enough, to prove a trying time for Swift. As yet he had heard nothing of Ernest's illness, or those other events which had followed so quickly upon it.

Only the day before indeed he had received the letter in which Fern told him of the rumors as to Lord Somerton's engagement, and informed him of the extraordinary neglect with which the Earl had hitherto treated her.

He was still deeply pondering on these two subjects, and wondering what, if any, could be the connection between them, as he that morning took his way to the merchant's office, where he spent the greater part of every day.

"My wife desired me to give you this, Levick," was almost the first sentence with which he was greeted.

And the head—indeed the sole representative—of the firm, a scraggy, yellow-skinned, gray-headed Englishman, tossed a small scented, gilt-edged envelope towards him.

Inside Swift found the following—

"Dear Mr. Levick.—Will you be so good as to come and see me some time to-night? I have something very particular to say to you. Very sincerely yours,

LAVINIA WETHERLEY."

It was written in the sprawling, scratchy, uneducated hand in which he had once or twice before received similar notes, and the sight of which brought a smile to his lips.

"I wonder who wants me most—the mother or the daughter?" he muttered rather sarcastically to himself.

It was a great pity that all women spoilt him so. Such treatment tended to make him think himself a very all-conquering hero indeed.

But upon this occasion it must be owned that his ideas were not far wrong.

The hot, glaring day was over. There seemed, now that the burning overwhelming heat was passed, to be almost a coolness in the air, although the thermometer still registered more degrees in the shade than Swift cared to think of, as he rode towards the house to which he had been invited. It was a fine-looking building enough, although lacking a good many things which go to make up an Englishman's ideas of comfort.

But the room into which the young man was ushered, with its cool pretty furniture, its glittering mirrors, its shaded windows and its large slowly-waving punkah, looked grateful and refreshing to his tired eyes. When he entered it was empty, and he threw himself down wearisomely enough upon one of the lounges, and stretching his arms out above his head, was speedily lost, first in thoughts and then in dreams, of Fern and of home.

He heard her voice, he touched her lovely bright hair, he looked into her happy downcast face. And then, even whilst all the rest faded away, he felt—yes, he undoubtedly did feel—the touch of her lips, soft and glowing, upon his own.

The sensations were so deliciously real that it gradually aroused him; and even then it did not pass off. In an instant more he was wide awake, with presence of mind enough to open his eyes without any previous movement of warning.

And then—— He was but a man, and he put out his arms and caught firmly a very slim waist close beside him, looked with his beautiful laughing eyes into a blushing face very near his own, and proceeded to give back the kisses—not Fern's—in kind.

"Mr. Levick!"

"Miss Wetherley!"—imitating the girl's reproving tone, and smiling the while.

"How dare you?"

"And how dare you?"—the smile deepening into a laugh.

She was a tall, rather handsome and extremely graceful girl, with the colorless complexion and languid manner so common to women who have lived much in India. Any one more utterly unlike her hard, business-like, bilious father, or her vulgar, loud-tongued, bustling mother, who had been a housemaid in England before Mr. Wetherley had married her and brought her out to India, and whose brisk coarseness even the heat of Calcutta could not tone down, it would have been impossible to find.

"I didn't do anything," said Sibyl, slowly and sullenly, dropping her big dark eyes and blushing more than ever.

"No? Ah, then it must have been my mistake! Shall I put the blunder right?"

He gazed into her face with a comic, careless admiration, looking quite ready and willing to repeat the offence. Fern's lips were not the first nor—as has been seen—the last, that Swift Levick would very gladly caress.

The girl raised her face again slowly and looked at him quietly for an instant. Then she said calmly—

"If you like."

And she never stirred as she watched him rise and come across to her. Only when again, with that same triumphant laugh, he stooped to touch her rosy mouth she let her head fall upon his shoulder

"Then you do love me, Swift?"

He started, and sprang backwards with more energy than politeness

"What?"

"Don't you love me?"—changing the form of her piteous inquiry and looking wistfully up into his eyes.

He turned from her and walked out into the verandah. But Miss Wetherley, indolent and languid as she was by nature, could be very persevering when she chose, and to-night she did choose. She followed him and laid her slender white hand upon his coat-sleeve. He shook it off as mercilessly as if it had been a centipede.

"I thought your mother wanted me?" he observed gruffly. "I had a note from her this morning asking me to come, else I shouldn't be here."

"Yes, I know. I wrote it for her. She had—there was—— Oh, Swift,"—with a sudden burst of tears—"how unkind and cruel you are!"

"Don't be so absurd, Sibyl. What have I done?" he returned roughly. "How am I unkind and cruel? In asking for Mrs. Wetherley, who sent for me?"

"No, no," she answered in gasps; "but in not loving me. I'm sure I thought from the way you have gone on sometimes that you did! And it would be so much for your own good too," she added quite artfully.

"Of that I am certain,"—somewhat satirically.

He was rather cruel certainly. But then his conscience in giving him sundry pricks and twinges, reminded him that if Sibyl Wetherley had been outspoken and immodest he had given her quite enough reason to believe that her conduct would be welcome to him.

Yet now, at the last moment, he thought of how all his words and actions would look in Fern's eyes.

To kiss a girl was nothing much—or so he told himself—although his betrothed would probably not have liked to hear even of that.

But to say that he loved her! Swift Levick felt that he must draw the line somewhere. But Sibyl had not finished yet.

"Mother did mean to see you, but I persuaded her to let me," she whimpered. "She and father were talking it over last night. I heard them! And he told her to suggest it to you."

"What? I'm really sorry to seem stupid; but, indeed, I can't understand what you are talking about!" cried Swift, driven to desperation.

"He wants to go to England for a time, and to take mother with him. And you were to be made a partner first and to marry me."

With that she returned to the room, threw herself down upon the corner of a couch, and redoubled her uncomfortable wailing.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

EMPLOYMENT.—It is an old trick of despots, and a good one, to employ their subjects. Why? To keep them out of mischief. Employed men are most contented. There is no conspiracy. Men do not sit down and coolly proceed to concoct iniquity so long as there is plenty of pleasant and profitable employment for body and mind. Work drives off discontent, provided there is compensation in proportion to the amount of labor performed. There must be a stimulant. God never intended man should sweat without eating of the fruits of his labor—reaping a reward—more than he intended the idle man should revel in plenty and grow gouty on luxuries. Industry is a great peace maker—a mind-your-own-business citizen. Something to do renders the despairing goodnatured and hopeful—stops the cry of the hungry, and promotes all virtue. The best men are the most industrious; the most wealthy work the hardest. They always find something to do.

ARIOT, the brilliant scholar, and professor of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, who is ranked among those who have contributed most toward the perfection of the French language, learned to write on birch-bark with charcoal, while he lived on a loaf of bread per day.

Bric-a-Brac.

THE SWALLOWS.—Swallows take their food exclusively from the air, and they drink when flying. This, so far as is known to naturalists, cannot be said of any other bird. Various species of gnats and ephemera constitute the food of swallows upon their arrival in this country, but, as summer advances, winged beetles are also greedily taken. So rapidly does the bird capture these that, after it has been on the wing but a few moments, it has accumulated sufficient to form a pellet as large as an ordinary rifle-bullet.

THE FAIRIES.—A legend is current in Anglesea which attributes the origin of fairies to an incident that occurred in the time of our Lord. There lived a woman at that time who had twenty children. She was ashamed of having so large a family, and seeing our Lord approach her dwelling, she concealed half of them. When He had departed she went to seek them, but nowhere could they be found, and never were they seen again. This was looked upon as punishment from Heaven for hiding what it had given, and it is said that from these missing children and their offspring the race of the fairies arose.

ODD LETTER-CARRYING.—At the siege of Steenwick, in 1581, leaden cannon balls were used, each weighing about five pounds. These were hollowed out on one side, and a letter or other missive was placed in the cavity, which was afterwards closed with a lead capsule. To the other side of the ball was attached a piece of tarred rope. When one of these balls was fired from a cannon into a town, the blazing rope, as a messenger from the camp of their allies, informed the inhabitants that the ball contained letters, and it was then opened. Similar projectiles were used to convey messages during the siege of Turin, A. D. 1640.

FANCY.—Imagination is a powerful instrument, not only in saving life, but, if we are to believe the following oft-told tale, also in destroying it. A condemned man was to have his life spared if he would sleep for one night in a bed just vacated by a person that had died of cholera. The man consented, slept in the bed, took cholera, and died. And yet that bed was perfectly free from impurities, for in fact no one had ever laid upon it! Still more marvellous is the story told of a man who was bled to death, and yet not a single drop of blood was extracted from his veins!

THE CONDEMNED.—In old times those who were accused of robbery were put to trial by a piece of barley bread, on which the mass had been said; and if they could not swallow it they were declared guilty. This mode of trial was improved by adding to the bread a slice of cheese; and such were their credulity and firm dependence on Heaven in these ridiculous trials, that they were very particular in this holy bread and cheese called the consecrated. The bread was to be of unleavened barley, and the cheese made of ewe's milk in the month of May. A French author observes that the expression, "May this piece of bread choke me!" comes from this custom. The anecdote of Earl Godwin's death by swallowing a piece of bread, in making this asseveration, is recorded in English history.

THE WAY OF IT.—The old-fashioned pink and blue-figured crockery was printed in the same way that designs are put on crockery to-day. The finest and most expensive wares are painted by hand but the cheaper grades are printed only. When the pottery is in the state called biscuit ware—that is, when it has been whitened by baking but has received no glaze—the pattern for use upon it is printed on paper in enamel colors, and while the printing is still wet is applied to the ware; the enamel ink is absorbed by the porous material, and, after a time, the paper is washed off, leaving the pattern clearly stamped upon the ware. It is then fired, to fix the color, dipped in glaze, then given another firing, which converts the glaze into a perfectly transparent, glassy covering all over the surface of the pottery. The painted decorations on fine porcelain are not applied on the biscuit ware, but on ware that has been glazed and fired, and is again fired after the design has been painted on it.

ROYAL DIVINITIES.—There is a curious dissertation, in an old French work, "on the divine honors which were paid to the governors of provinces during the Roman republic." During their life-time these originally began in gratitude, and at length degenerated into flattery. These facts curiously show how far the human mind can advance, when led on by customs that operate invisibly on it, and blind us in our absurdities. One of these ceremonies was exquisitely ridiculous. When they voted a statue to a proconsul, they placed it among the statues of the gods in the festival called "Lectisternium;" from the ridiculous circumstances of this solemn festival. On that day the gods were invited to a repast, which was however spread in various quarters of the city, to satiate mouths more mortal. The gods were however taken down from their pedestals, laid on beds ornamented in their temples; pillows were placed under their marble heads; and while they reposed in this easy posture they were served with a magnificent repast. When Cæsar had conquered Rome, the servile senate put him to dine with the gods. Fatigued by, and ashamed of these honors, he desired the senate to erase from his statue in the capital the title they had given him of a "demi-god!"

A DEBT of gratitude is too often compromised at about ten cents on the dollar.

WHAT CARE WE?

Why need you care, dear wife, or heed
The passing of your early grace?
What though the lilies supercede
The springtime roses of your face?
What though the azure of your eyes
Has mellowed to a softer blue?
The fairest tints that deck the skies
Are caught from twilight's fading hue.

Why should the ripened fruit regret
Its summer bloom, howe'er so fair?
Why need you sigh, though Time should set
His crown of silver on your hair?
The sweetest fragrance of the rose
Is from its fading petals pressed,
And nature spreads her earliest snows
Above the flowers she loves the best.

What care we for the vanished years,
Save for the fruit their summers brought?
What care we for our fallen tears,
Save for the rainbows on them wrought?
Why should we mourn the joys we shared,
Or see them perish with regret,
Since on the fruit our hearts have fared,
And memory keeps the rainbows yet?

What though our winter time has come,
And summer's buds and blooms expire?
Love hath an ever radiant home,
And bids us welcome to its fire.
He dwelt with us through all the spring;
We sheltered him from summer's heat;
Now at his hearth we'll sit and sing,
And let the wintry tempest beat.

FOR LOVE OF HER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LIKE UNTO A STAR," "BRUNA'S STORY," "A GIRL'S DESPAIR," "TWICE MARRIED," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

THE dusk grew and deepened into the early night of a November day, the street beneath the window was quiet and deserted save for the few idlers grouped about the door of the hotel, waiting for the verdict, of the coroner's jury with eager interest.

There were lights in most of the windows now, and over the hall doors, while from the doors and windows of the "Royal George," the ruddy glow of light and fire shone on the street, making patches of light on the deserted pavement.

In the room where Maud waited alone, the candle flickering on the mantel-piece gave a dim and religious light, making darkness visible.

She had not moved since the earl had left her, although her tears had ceased; she sat drooping in the wide old window seat, her head leaning languidly back against the oaken framework, her hands drooping helplessly at her sides.

Sometimes, as she sat there faint and chill in the growing darkness, shivering under her warm furs yet burning with fever, it had seemed to her that this must be all a dream, a horrible nightmare, from which, by and-by, she would awaken. Surely it could not be Maud Kinsley who sat shivering there! who had been a witness at an inquest; who had publicly, before all those eager eyes, avowed an engagement which did not until that moment, exist.

Surely it could not be that the happy, light-hearted girl who had known no deeper sorrow than her sister's illness, had been altered in a few brief moments into a broken-hearted woman, full of fear, and dread, and pain.

Surely it could not have been her brother Gilbert who had come to her that night and told her.

Ah, no—no, it was all a dream, all a horrible dream, from which she would soon awaken to the blessed knowledge of the truth!

Yet how vividly she must have dreamed since the recollection was so vivid. Even now she thought she could hear that strange fumbling at the door and then at the window.

Even now, in the growing darkness of the room where she sat, she seemed to see her brother's haggard face, to feel his heavy head upon her arm, to hear his broken words.

Could it be a dream? the girl thought wildly, as she rose and staggered into the centre of the room.

Ah, no—no—no! It was no dream to think, to know, that of all women she was the most miserable!

She crept back again to the window seat and sank down there, half stupified yet suffering keenly still; as she crouched there the church clock chimed the hour of six.

Meanwhile in the long crowded room the proceedings had come to an end. Doctor Kinsley's groom had given evidence as to the hour of Mr. Graeme's return on the night of the seventeenth.

It was half-past ten, and the horse in the dog-cart showed signs of hard driving. Mr. Graeme had said to him that he had mistaken the road and had gone considerably out of his way.

There were no marks of a struggle about him, he looked just as usual, and was wearing his grey overcoat, the one produced, while the man added, with characteristic bluntness, that Mr. Graeme was a real gentleman, and that he was quite sure of his innocence—an assertion which made one or two of the jurymen smile, but had no other effect.

When this witness stood down, it seemed as if the inquiry was over, but the foreman of the jury rose and said he would like, with the coroner's permission, to put a few questions to Doctor Blake, and the young surgeon came forward with manifest reluctance.

"You have not told us, Doctor Blake," the foreman said quietly, "what the impression left upon your mind by Kirby's dying words were? You heard them distinctly?"

"As distinctly as possible, which was not very distinctly, since his voice was almost inaudible and he himself was dying."

"You are quite sure that he did not finish the utterance of the word of which only the first part was audible of those around him?"

"Quite sure."

"If he had done so, you would have heard it even if the other had not?"

"Probably. I was kneeling beside him supporting his head, and my ear was quite close to him."

"And you are quite sure you heard nothing but the beginning—'paint'?"

"'Paint' is a word in itself," said the surgeon coolly. "No one can be sure that he meant any other."

The foreman looked a trifle confused and said no more. There was no further evidence forthcoming. Mr. Home had done his best, or his worst, and covered himself with glory in the eyes of the Berkeley officials, to whom, excepting Lord Dereham himself perhaps, he was the greatest person there.

The coroner summed up briefly, gravely, impartially, with even more reticence than usual, and with a troubled look in his grave, grey eyes. The jury had the evidence before them, they must base their verdict on it, such as it was. Clearly and briefly he placed the circumstances before them, reminding them solemnly of their duty, and ending with the usual exhortation; and then the jury rose to retire amid a solemn silence.

Just as they were about to leave the room a hoarse, eager voice ordered them to remain, and every eye in the room was turned upon Gilbert Kinsley, who had risen and stood erect, grasping with one trembling hand the back of the chair in which he had been seated.

The young man was agitated and trembling, his voice was shaking; he was evidently a prey to intense agitation.

"Before you go," he said unsteadily, while Arnold's glance, as it rested on his face, was for the first time troubled and anxious, and full of warning, "let me say a few words. I am not calm enough just now to plead for my friend as I would wish; I am too indignant that such pleading should be necessary. That, whatever proofs you may have against him, I am sure of his innocence. I have known him, I have lived with him in closest intimacy for many years. I know him to be true and faithful and gentle, incapable of baseness, incapable of harming anyone, without an enemy in this world! I cannot speak to you as I would," he added passionately, "but if you know him as I know him, even in face of evidence a hundred times more convincing than this, you would not even suspect——"

He broke down, covering his face with his hands.

Arnold's eyes rested on him with a look of strange pity and compassion, which Lord Dereham saw and wondered at. The jurymen retired in grave and subdued silence.

When they had left the room, most of those present glanced at Arnold Graeme; he was grave and quiet, and outwardly, at least, he was less agitated than anyone present.

Lord Dereham had approached him and spoken a few words, which Arnold had answered rather coldly.

It was painful to him to owe any kindness to the earl, yet when he glanced at Gilbert, and saw how terribly he was agitated, he felt that it would be better that he should be spared any further emotion just then, and as Lord Dereham stood by him, grave and troubled, he said rather hastily—

"I wish you would induce Gilbert to go before the jury return, Lord Dereham; he is quite unfit for any further agitation. If you can get him to go home, pray do; it will be best; if you can prevent it, don't let him see his sister; she has borne enough already."

Lord Dereham crossed the room and touched Gilbert on the shoulder.

He remembered afterwards with what a start he lifted his blanched face, and what a terrible fear looked at him out of the blue eyes which were usually so serene and smiling.

At first he hardly seemed to understand what the earl said, but after a moment he rose with a look of relief, and, leaning on Lord Dereham's arm, left the room, while the spectators glanced after him compassionately, thinking how deeply he felt his friend's position, and what a painful thing it was for all at Eyrholme that their friend and guest should be mixed up in such a thing.

As the door closed after them, Arnold was conscious of a sensation strangely like relief. Not that, in his generosity and unselfishness, he rated highly the sacrifice he had made; not that he censured Gilbert for accepting that sacrifice.

It was not for his own sake, the artist thought in his generous self-abnegation, that Gilbert accepted it; it was for the sake of those dear to him; for the father whose death-blow would be his son's disgrace, the sisters whose hearts would be broken by the shame.

He, Graeme, was a lonely man; no one would suffer in his suffering; there was no family pride to be endangered, no position and honor to be trampled in the dust, and he was glad to bear the pain for Maud's sake; for her who had spoken such brave and steadfast words in his defence so short a time ago; who had faced all present so unflinchingly, with such brave purpose and dignity and modesty, and said she had faith and trust in him; and would show her that her trust was justified; he would show her that she might put her faith in him even unto death.

There was a brave, steady light in his grey eyes as he waited, and Lord Dereham, who had returned to the room, wondered again at the look of lofty resolve on the grave, gentle face of the man on whom suspicion had fallen so darkly, yet who looked so incapable of such a deed, unless it had been done by accident in a struggle with the keeper. And yet, could it be that Maud Kinsley's favored lover could be faithless to her?

The jury were not long absent; there was a slight sensation among the spectators as they filed slowly in. One glance at the foreman's face told Arnold Graeme what he had to expect; and brave as he was, and strong to suffer, his lips turned pale under his soft, fair moustache as he read the verdict in the grave, sorrowful face.

Very grave, and a trifle unsteady, was the foreman's voice as he answered the coroner's question.

But clearly and distinctly the words fell on Arnold Graeme's ears as he stood, calm and motionless, in the light of the glaring gas lamps.

"We find that the deceased, Joseph Kirby, died by manslaughter, and that the instrument of his death was the gun produced in Court. And we further find that Arnold Francis Graeme is guilty of the manslaughter; but we wish to add that we believe the deed was not premeditated, but done, perhaps, by accident during a struggle with the deceased."

There was a momentary silence. Many of those present had expected a far different verdict; some had imagined that it would have been an open verdict, others that it would have been one of murder against Arnold Graeme.

Then the silence was broken by many eager voices and murmurs.

Mr. Elwood's voice sounded stern and cold, enjoining silence; and when the murmurs died away, he formally committed Arnold Francis Graeme for trial at the next assizes at Rochester.

The artist bowed in silence; there was no surprise as there was no fear on his stern face.

"Am I to consider myself a prisoner?" he asked quietly. "Pardon me, but I have lived so long abroad that I am ignorant of English customs."

"I regret to say that you are a prisoner, Mr. Graeme," the coroner said gravely. "For the present at least. Whether the magistrates will accept bail or not I cannot say. I believe not; so,"—with a little hesitation, "if you have any arrangements you wish to make, any directions to give, you are welcome to do so now."

"I am obliged by so much courtesy," Arnold said quietly. "I should like to say a few words to my friend Gilbert Kinsley and—to his sister."

"Certainly—there is no objection. Neither have left the hotel, I believe?" answered Mr. Elwood, looking at Lord Dereham for information.

"No," said the earl quietly. "They are both here."

"Then perhaps your lordship will be good enough to conduct Mr. Graeme to them," said the coroner with a grave bow, and as the two young men turned and walked down to the room, the earl's face was the graver, the more troubled of the two. As they paused on the landing outside, Graeme said quietly—

"She is alone?"

"Yes. Gilbert is in another room."

"Will you—I am trespassing sorely on your lordship's forbearance, but these unfortunate circumstances must be my excuse—will you tell her?"

For a moment Lord Dereham hesitated, then he opened the door quietly and went into the room. Graeme stood quiet and motionless on the landing, waiting, not unconscious of, yet indifferent to, that other waiting figure which had followed them from the Court room.

There was plenty of noise and animation in the "Royal George" now; the crowd was pouring out down the long passage, talking eagerly as they went, commenting on the evidence, the verdict, on the calmness of the prisoner.

Two or three of the women were speaking softly of the poor young girl who, as it seemed, loved him, and whom they had seen grow up among them from her toddling childhood to her sweet and gracious womanhood; and tears rose in their eyes as they thought of her.

Others, and these, were many, expressed compassion for Gilbert, whose sorrow for his friends seemed to have broken him down; and others again wondred where Doctor Kinsley was that he had not been present, not knowing that he was kept at the Grange in close attendance on his dying friend.

The buzz of many voices, the sound of many tramping feet, reached Arnold Graeme as he stood waiting; from the room into which Lord Dereham had disappeared no sound came, no sob, no cry, no fall.

A few minutes passed and the earl came out, looking lividly pale; he could not speak as he held the door open for Gilbert to enter and closed it upon him without a word.

The quiet waiting figure made a movement as if to follow; but with an imperative gesture Lord Dereham fortnde him, and alone in the dim light, Arnold Graeme and Maud Kinsley met.

CHAPTER XVI.

FOR a moment Arnold Graeme stood just within the room without making a step towards Maud, who was also standing and motionless.

His eyes, used to the glare of the gas in the room where he had been declared guilty of Joe Kirby's death, were at first powerless in the feeble light of the two candles, which were the only illumination; but after a minute he saw her where she stood, trembling and pressing both hands to her heart as if to stop its violent pulsations, and as their eyes met she put out two little shaking hands to him, and advancing quickly he caught them in his own.

Even then neither spoke, the silence remained unbroken.

Arnold had drawn her close to him and held her hands pressed to his throbbing heart.

His eyes were fixed upon her face—the pale, changed beautiful face, with a look of deathless love, and in that supreme moment he forgot all save her.

He forgot his shame, his peril, his disgrace; he remembered only that they were together, and that he loved her.

And Maud also could find no words just then, although his peril, his disgrace were but too present with her.

Her eyes looked into his with a tearless agony in their lustrous depths; her shaking hands lay passive in his clasp as he held them pressed to his breast; her white lips were parted, and she breathed quickly like one in bodily pain.

As the silence of the room the quick footsteps on the pavement without, the Babel of eager voices in the street brought Arnold Graeme back to the terrible present, and to the trouble they shared together.

"Lord Dereham told you?" he said gently, as he held her hands in his and looked into the beautiful, unhappy eyes. "Is it not so, sister?"

The girl looked up at him suddenly, and put out two little shaking hands to meet his.

"Arnold," she said, steadying her voice by a strong effort of self-control, "those words which I spoke before them all came from the very depths of my heart. If you will have me, if you will take me, faulty and unworthy—oh, how unworthy!—as I am, to be your wife, I give you your answer now. If you care to have me I will be your wife."

They had both risen in the supreme emotion of the moment. The young man caught her in his eager arms, and she let her head fall upon his shoulder in an agony of tears. For a few minutes they stood thus, only Maud's heavy breathing breaking the silence as she rested against him, weary, spent, utterly broken down; while Arnold Graeme's heart beating so heavily against her as they stood together, was full of joy which was almost pain, of pain which was almost joy, in this the sweetest yet bitterest moment his life had known or would ever know.

"Maud," he whispered presently, when the heavy sobs had ceased and the girl was leaning against his shoulder exhausted almost to faintness, yet calm and composed again,—"can you listen to me now, dear? I have much to say to you yet, and the time is going, oh, so fast!"

"Yes," she answered feebly. "I am sorry, you must forgive me. I ought not to have distressed you so."

"You have not distressed me; you have made me unspeakably happy," he whispered tenderly. And you must not think, my dearest, that you steadfast faith in me and the truth you have shown me are less dear to me because I say so little of them now. I only wish, with such a heartfelt wish, that I were less unworthy of them."

He spoke very earnestly, with all his heart in the tender words; the girl looked up at him with tear-blinded, dim eyes, and saw through that mist of tears a look of noble purpose on the brave, gentle face which gave it a strange beauty. "So much depends upon you, dear. I have to leave so much on these slight shoulders that I tremble for you, Maud. If I could only be by your side to share the burden, to help you to bear your part, I could make it easier for you, but I think they will not accept bail, and for a little while at least you must bear all alone. Bertie cannot help you, my child; you must not depend upon him. He feels all this, poor boy, terribly. His punishment will be as great as if he were known to be guilty, but by this means your father and sister will be spared, and perhaps," he added a trifle wistfully, "your own pain will be a little lessened. You have only to keep silence, Maudie, and all will be well."

"I think you need have no further anxiety about Gilbert," he continued gently, putting aside the loosened golden hair, which fell about her face, with very tender fingers. "You need fear no more weakness or folly from him; he will go back to Rome, the foreign life suits him best, and Doctor Kinsley knows it and has spoken to him about it; he will win name and fame there, Maud, and you will yet be proud of your brother."

Proud of him! The words sounded almost mockingly in Maud's ears.

Proud of him who could let another bear the penalty of his wrong-doing. She shook her head wearily as it rested against his shoulder; he glanced at her quickly, guessing her thoughts.

"Whatever happens to me, my child," he said hurriedly; "if things should come to the worst, even the very worst, only keep silence. If I would be called upon to give my life—it is impossible, and I only speak for the sake of argument—still keep silence. I would give it gladly, freely, willingly, for your sake and Bertie's, and it is I who feel grateful to you for letting me pay

back thus some of the great kindness I have received from you all."

"Kindness?" the girl said bitterly.

"Ay, kindness," he replied earnestly; "the truest kindness. Dear, you do not know, you cannot, having all your life had the shelter of home and its care and love about you, what the glimpse of your home life was to me, nor what happiness I owe to you. If this small thing, which I am glad to do for you, Maud, seems a cause for gratitude, I want you to remember in the future that your debt is more than paid, that I was paid long before it was incurred. You will remember, dear, will you not?"

"I will remember that I owe you a debt which the devotion of all my life can never repay," she said passionately. "Arnold, do you think I am a stock or a stone not to feel that you are suffering, that you must suffer, that we are base and contemptible to accept so great a——"

He put his finger gently on the quivering lips and silenced her.

He was smiling slightly as he looked down at her.

"I never knew you were so wilful before," he said lightly. "Such a wilful, determined little woman! Well, I am glad you are so very determined, since I have to leave so much in your hands."

He paused for a moment, and when he spoke, the words he uttered were spoken with an effort he did not suspect.

"If in the days that are coming, Maud," he said gravely, "you want help, or advice, or assistance, I think you may safely trust in Lord Dereham. He is a noble and generous man, devoted to you all, and he has much influence, much power. If you are in any difficulty, and you go to him, dear, I am sure he will help you, and that you may trust him as freely as you could trust me."

She answered nothing; she heard the words truly, but they were heard as if in a dream, and seemed to have no meaning for her confused brain.

Later she remembered them, and remembered them with many, many tears.

"And now, one word more, Maud," he said very earnestly. "I want you to promise me that you will not fret or distress yourself about what you cannot alter. Life has 'nobler uses than regret,' my darling, and yours, a bright and happy one, as I hope and pray, love, is all before you. Whatever comes of this, do not grieve; it will be best and wisest; we shall have saved Bertie, we shall have spared your father and sister much distress, and we must be content with that, my child. Whatever comes, Maud, let them believe me guilty. It matters very little since I and you, know that I am innocent. Let no suspicion fall on the brother you love, because if that should come to pass I shall have endured in vain. You hear me, dear, and you understand?"

"I understand," she answers quietly.

"And you will do as I entreat you, my dearest?"

"I will try."

"If you try, you must succeed, dear child; women can be brave and clever for those they love! Bring all your woman's devotion and your woman's quickness of intuition to help me, Maud, and we shall succeed, never fear!"

The Babel of voices, the noise of the tramping mob had died away now, all was quiet in the street and in the hotel; the dusk had deepened without into dark night, the dim light of the candles shone reflected in the mirror over the mantelpiece.

Arnold had drawn Maud to the sofa, and had seated himself beside her, holding her hands in his warm, tender clasp; his heart was failing him now as the moment of parting came so near, his face was very pale in the feeble flickering light.

He was wondering how and where they would meet again. Ah! if he could have foreseen!

But Maud was not looking forward, she was thinking only of the present, and its difficulties and sorrow.

She was conscious only of the great debt she owed him, and the thought that she could not leave her debt unpaid.

He had not counted the cost in his generosity—could she do so?

He had laid down honor, happiness, freedom for her; could she be less generous? to give him the treasure he had craved—the devotion of her life—was her only means of paying the debt, and to so pay it was only consistent with her code of honor. If she did not love him, he need never know.

She slid down beside him, and kneeling there, both her sweet eyes lifted to his face, reading the deathless love and tenderness written there, she put her little hands in his.

"How can I thank you?" she said, with a tremor of deep earnestness in her broken voice. "How can I thank you? Words are so powerless to tell you how truly and deeply I feel your generosity! But, Arnold, you have not yet told me that you will accept what I offered you—that you will ratify"—she forced a smile on her pallid, trembling lips—"the barefaced assertion I made a short time ago."

He looked down at her and smiled sadly, but answered nothing.

"The other night, which seems so long ago now," she went on brokenly, "I told you that I could not answer you then, but that I would do so in a few days. I did not know then how greatly I should learn to depend upon you and trust you, but I know it now. Will you take your answer now, Arnold?"

She looked up in his face with her eyes full of beseeching earnestness.

"And let that answer be 'yes.'"

"My darling, think," he said gently, turning away his eyes from her face, as if he could not bear the prayer in her glance; "even if you loved me, I could not accept such a sacrifice from you now! Whatever the future has in store, there will always remain a stain upon my name, and——"

"A stain brought there by my brother," she exclaimed passionately. "A stain which in my eyes is a higher honor than a crown could be! Ah, when you speak thus, do you think of the reproach you are casting upon us? There is no stain on you, it is on us. Are you afraid to deepen that stain by marrying Gilbert Kinsley's sister?"

"Maud, how cruelly you misunderstand me," he said gently; "you do not mean those words, I know, dear. Cannot you understand that no stain touches you and yours? You have had the misfortune to have an unworthy friend to bestow your confidence on unworthily, that is all."

"I at least know that it is not so," she said hastily. "Arnold you have not considered either. I have publicly announced my engagement to you. Would you have it said that I deserted you when you were in trouble, that I, your promised wife, believed you guilty?"

His eyes were dim as they rested on her; he saw the lovely earnest face through a mist of unshed tears which gathered thickly in his eyes.

"You will not refuse me, you cannot," she continued tremulously. "See," she went on, drawing from her finger a ring, "since you give me no ring, I will give you one. It will fit your little finger, I know, and you must wear it for my sake and in token of our engagement."

With a pretty, pathetic playfulness, which cost her a stronger effort even than he guessed, she took his hand in hers and slipped the ring on the little finger of his left hand.

It was a plain gold ring, one he had often noticed on her hand; a hand with the word Souvenir raised in old English letters upon it.

"You will keep it—you will wear it!" the girl said earnestly. "It will help you to remember me, and when you look at it, don't think of the trouble I have given you, the pain I have caused you, but only that if you will let me, I will devote my life to your happiness."

Her voice failed slightly over the last words; her head sank forward on his knee.

She knew that she did not love him, but she knew that he loved her, and if by her self-surrender, she could make up to him for what he was suffering for her brother's sake, she was willing to do so.

And yet, by binding herself to him, she knew that she shut herself out from happier things; that she put away from her forever the reality of other dreams which might perhaps have been fulfilled. Still she did not hesitate.

She was of too noble and generous a temper to give grudgingly when she gave, and perhaps she never thought of the terrible temptation to which she exposed this man who loved her.

He knew her well; he knew that if she plighted him her troth, no temptation, no power could induce her to break it; that his shame—since, as she said, it did not touch him—his disgrace—even his punishment could have no effect upon her constancy, that she would be true to him through all!

Yet he knew, too, that true and faithful and steadfast as she was, she did not love him, perhaps would never love him, and he felt that he dared not accept such a sacrifice.

And yet it was so hard; that which would have given him supremest joy was within his reach, and he dared not put out his hand and take it.

It would be cruel, he thought, to bind her to an engagement to which her father would never consent, which would give her nothing but happiness.

Yet, with such a hope before him, he could endure any punishment, any suffering gladly; without it, his future looked desolate and accursed!

He dropped her hands and covered his face with his fingers, and in the silence which fell between them it seemed as if she must hear the loud, hard panting of his aching heart.

CHAPTER XVII.

IT was many minutes before Arnold Graeme could force his quivering lips to answer her, or his dim and miserable eyes to rest upon the beautiful, earnest face, and when he uncovered his face, Maud could hardly repress a cry at the pain she read there.

Her words, her innocent appeal had tried him as no public accusation could try him.

Her temptation found him as weak as the coroner and his court had found him strong.

"You hardly know what you are asking me, Maud," he said gently, though every word seemed wrung from his throbbing heart. "I know how generously your words are meant, my dearest. I know that you would come to me and devote your sweet life to mine without a murmur, but I cannot have it so!"

He paused a moment. His voice was steadier as he went on.

"No, my child, no, my darling, no," he said, raising her as he stood up, and holding her within his arm. "It cannot be! who can tell how this may end? Hush, let me speak, and however it ends, Maudie, it will leave a stain upon me which I could not bear you to share."

She lifted her little hand and pressed it upon his lips.

"You are very hard to persuade," she said gently; "but you have called me a wilful woman, and I am one! Whatever the result of the trial is, however it ends, I am your betrothed wife, and while you keep my ring—and you shall not remove it—I will never think of anyone else as my future husband. There," she said, breaking suddenly into a little hysterical laugh; "see how bold you make me; see how you make me reverse all the order of things; I have taken your place, and you have taken mine. You see what you have forced me to do."

"Maud"—he caught her hands in his and held them close pressed to his heart; "you shall have your own way in this, if you will answer me one question."

She caught her breath for a moment, guessing what the question was, but her eyes met his, brave and frankly.

"What is it?" she questioned.

"It is this. Do you love me?"

He held her hands in a clasp which bruised and hurt the tender flesh, his voice was very low, yet full of suppressed passion.

As his eyes met hers, her gaze drooped and softened, and the tears which had gathered in her eyes rolled slowly over her colorless cheeks.

She pitied him so greatly, she honored him with so great an honor, his position appealed so strongly to her compassion; her gratitude was so deep, her pity so intense, that it was no wonder that in that moment of exultation she mistook her feeling for him for love.

"Yes," she said softly. "I love you, Arnold."

"Ah!"

Once more, for one brief moment, he held her in his eager arms, pressed close to his throbbing heart, but even then he did not seek to touch her lips.

He stooped his own to the loosened gold of her hair.

"I will keep your ring, my darling," he said. "I will never part with it in life, and——"

"While you keep it, Arnold, I shall know that you look upon me as your future wife," she said earnestly.

"And when I return or send it back to you, you will be free," he answered gently. "You will always remember that, Maudie; and remember too, dear, that I do not hold you bound, that if ever—aye, and that time will come—you see that your happiness lies in another direction, never hesitate, even for a moment! My past life has never known, my future can never know, any wish as strong as that for your happiness. Let no memory of me mar it, Maud! Think of me without pain as one who loves you and is glad—more than glad—to serve you! If it be for your happiness, my darling, blot out every remembrance of me from your heart; forget that I ever lived and loved you."

In keenest pain she looked upward at him.

"Why do you speak so sadly?" she asked huskily. "As if there were a long separation before us, Arnold. Your going is only for a little time, soon you will come back to us, and——"

"We will not discuss that, love," he answered tenderly. "We have enough to think of just now! Be very brave and cheerful, my dearest, and be very good to poor Bertie, who needs all the care and love you can give him. I should like to have seen him again to-day, but it is better not. You will be patient with him, Maudie; he is the most to be pitied of us all!"

"You think of everything and everybody but yourself," she said with a tough of petulance. "Is there nothing we can do for you, Arnold?"

"I hardly know yet, dear," he answered tenderly, with a smile. "I am so unhappily ignorant of the law and its restrictions and privileges, that I do not know what is going to become of me just now. I shall know soon, and, at least, they have been merciful, most merciful to have allowed me so much grace!"

The night had gathered thick and dark without, the street lamps glimmered in the darkness.

Someone in the hotel was playing the piano, and the slow, sweet, dreamy air played came into the quiet room.

As he heard it, it recalled to Arnold Graeme the words he had sung to Maud three evenings ago.

"Across the after years
He listens all in vain,
To hear the one loved voice
Speak to his heart again.
Only a mem'ry lives
Of all the past to tell;
For all his hope and all his love
Lie in one word—'Farewell!'"

"Lie in one word—'Farewell!'" he murmured almost unconsciously, as a knock sounded at the door. "Maud, they have come; I must go!"

She clung to him with her little trembling white hands; in that moment her pity for him was indeed akin to love.

"Ah, no!—ah, no!" she whispered pitifully, hardly conscious of what she said. "Give me one moment yet; it is so hard—so hard. Oh, Bertie!—what have you done?"

"Hush, hush, child," he said hastily; "you do not know what you are saying. Ask your father to forgive me the shame I have brought upon his friendship to-day. Tell him I am sorry; Maud, you hear me, do you not?"

Her eyes met his half unconsciously; she leaned heavily upon his arm.

Ah, her endurance seemed to have failed her?

The door opened very softly; Lord Dereham's voice, low and husky, broke the silence.

"Mr. Graeme, I am sorry," it said; "but——"

"Yes, yes," Arnold answered quickly; "I am coming. Maud, good-bye! Remember all I have said. Maud! Maud!"

The pain in his voice roused her; she made a strong effort, shook off her faintness, and rallied.

Lord Dereham stood just within the room but he was not looking at them; her voice sounded in his ears like the voice of one in keen bodily anguish.

"Yes, I will remember," she said. "But, ah! I cannot let you go!"

"Hush, dear, hush," he whispered; "all will be well. Be comforted!"

He bent his head over her as he held her in his arms, and laid his cheek for a moment on her golden hair, as he whispered a blessing and a farewell, but even at this moment, when he was leaving her forever, he did not let his lips touch hers.

Just for a moment only they stood thus in the darkened room, and Lord Dereham thought bitterly that he would willingly have stood in Arnold Graeme's place; would gladly, if he might, have faced death, to have had her clinging arms about his throat her head upon his breast, her tears falling for him.

"Graeme," he exclaimed hoarsely, in his jealous pain, and, at the sound of his voice, Graeme started, gently loosed the feeble clasp and lifted his head.

"I am ready," he said quietly, and turned from Maud, who stood motionless with her arms drooping at her side.

Lord Dereham opened the door and followed him from the room.

On the landing without, the gas was lighted, the constable stood waiting, and in the bright light the two men looked at each other for a moment in silence.

The earl was the most moved, but Graeme was pale as death, and his face had changed and aged and was gray and drawn.

"Take care of her," he said in a low tone. "You have been very good, Lord Dereham! Be kind to her—her father is not here?"

"He has not come," answered the earl huskily.

"Ask him to forgive me," Arnold murmured. "And until he comes, take care of ——"

He could not utter her name, but inclining his head he turned away with a gesture of farewell.

Lord Dereham hesitated for a moment, then staring forward he held out his white hand.

"If you are a guilty man, you are also a most unhappy one," he said gravely. "You have my truest sympathy."

"And you my truest esteem."

Their hands met and parted; Graeme turned away; Lord Dereham entered the room they had just left and closed the door after him.

Maud was standing just where he had left her; she had not moved; her hands hung helplessly by her side, her eyes stared blindly before her with a strange unseeing look.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MUSIC AND MICE.—It may not be generally known that music kills mice. A party of three gentlemen were enjoying a musical evening, two being performers and the third merely a listener. The violinist played a random improvisation while a casual conversation was going on, when a small mouse was observed to run from a dark room into where the party sat.

There was no desire to hurt the little creature, and he was allowed to have his own way. The violinist stopped his playing, and the mouse immediately disappeared. The gentlemen had heard stories of the antics of so-called "musical mice," though they believed none of them, and it was resolved to try if something could not be done with the mouse, which seemed to be attracted by the violin.

Accordingly the violinist again began to play, and the trio was surprised to see the animal again appear almost immediately. Coming to a spot a few feet from the player, he lay down on the floor, his nose between his fore feet, and remained thus perfectly motionless.

In a minute or two the violinist stopped playing. The mouse did not move, and was watched in silence. An attempt to arouse him by a gentle touch with the violin bow did not disturb him the least, and it was found that he could be handled quite roughly without any effect.

His eyes were open, and the quick vibrations of his in breathing were very plain, but he seemed to be utterly unconscious. He was placed upon the floor, and in a short time seemed to revive slowly. He began to walk about with apparent difficulty, tottering and unsteady.

He gradually recovered until he appeared almost in his proper condition, when the music was again began. The first position was resumed at exactly the same spot. The player tried all manner of music, plaintive and gay, piano and forte, low and high on the strings, all kinds of trills and double stops and hords, but without any apparent effect.

He played for several minutes, when suddenly the mouse's form seemed to be convulsed throughout. He fell over upon his side, and after a few slight kicks, became motionless again. It was over with him. The music was stopped, and every effort was made to resuscitate the poor victim, but neither fresh air nor any other means of restoration within the range of the party's experience accomplished anything.

THERE is a "whistling well" on a farm in Clare County, Mich. It is 180 feet deep and whistles loudest just before a storm.

THE SEED WE SOW.

BY M. J. ADAMS.

The seed we sow will surely grow,
Early or late the sowing;
Though it be lost and whirled and tossed
By time winds in their blowing,
The germ is there, nor curse nor prayer
Can e'er prevent the growing.

The seed we sow will surely grow,
In earth or crevice creeping;
Despite the field the harvest yield
Shall prove to be in keeping
With what was sown—for curse or boon,
When we have done the reaping.

The seed we sow will surely grow,
Though it may ripen slowly;
It counts the same for wealth or fame,
Or lowest of the lowly;
Then woe are we if misery
Is sown by reckless folly!

FORTUNE'S HAND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "STRANGERS STILL," "PRINCE AND PEASANT," "THE LIGHTS OF ROCKBY," "A WOMAN'S SIN," ETC.

CHAPTER XX.—[CONTINUED.]

"THERE can't be infidelity where there never was fidelity," Yolande rejoins, in the same calm dreary fashion. "You never cared for me, even for one hour; your love was all given to some one else before I ever saw your face. How could you be faithful to me in heart, or mind, or feeling? I can't expect it."

"Don't say that!" Dallas exclaims hastily his eyes softening. "You can expect it. My own little wife, why shouldn't your husband love you?"

"Love two women at the same time?" Yolande asks scornfully, staring at him through her tears. "No, thank you; I don't want a share in your affections."

"Yolande, I wish you wouldn't talk such horrible nonsense," cries Dallas, incensed. "I wonder how you can stand there saying such cruel insulting things to me," he adds reproachfully. "If I loved another woman before I married you, that is no reason why I should not learn to love you now, and why we should not live happily and comfortably together."

"Learn to love me," Yolande repeats bitterly. "You need not give yourself the trouble. I have not the slightest intention of trying to learn to live happily and comfortably with you."

"Do you intend, then, that we shall go on leading this cat-and-dog existence?" Dallas asks, his lips trembling with rage, but with a dull intangible pain at his heart. For, in some strange way, the love of this faithful passionate girl, whose heart he knows is truly his, even while she repulses his caresses and defies his authority, seems to have suddenly become a dearer and more desirable possession than Joyce Murray's fickle fondness.

"No," Yolande answers quietly. "I was coming to speak to you on that subject just now—to propose that we should part."

"Part," he repeats, his face paling. "Certainly, if you desire it. No open scandal, you know. I won't permit that."

"You couldn't help permitting it if I were base and faithless to you, regardless of your feelings and of appearances," retorts Yolande sharply and passionately.

"As I am to you, that means," Dallas says. "Very well. Since you think so badly of me, we had certainly better part. What do you intend doing—if I may inquire?"

"I wish to go back to Rutland Gardens, to aunt Keren, of course," Yolande answers, in a sad half-inaudible tone, her mind misgiving her, her conscience reproving her, her heart bewailing the last vanishing hope of her lost love. "I thought of going up to London to-morrow morning. I do not care to stay here. It is rather miserable for me, and lonely."

There is a piteous quivering of the soft lips, and a tremor in the sorrowful voice, as Yolande turns her head away quickly.

Captain Glynne's eyes brighten with a smile.

"Poor little soul," he tells himself. "She is trying dreadfully hard to steel herself against me."

"I must ask you to remain over to-morrow," he says, speaking in an indifferent tone. "I cannot leave Pentreath as long as the Earl survives, for I have not seen him yet, though I believe he wishes to see me. So, as I must escort you, you see you must kindly defer your journey for two or three days longer."

"I can travel with Pitts," Yolande objects; but the voice is yielding and very unsteady, and the tip of her forefinger is most industriously tracing every curve and line of the carved chair-back.

"No, you can't travel with Pitts," Captain Glynne responds shortly, his voice changing also, and the smile flitting his eyes growing brighter.

"I don't see why I cannot," Yolande says, with a last feeble mutinous effort.

"Because, whatever you may think of me," he remarks gently, "I would not for the world offer you a public slight. We have not been married a month, Yolande, and, if I were to stay here and let you go to London alone, it would publish our mutual unhappiness to every one. You don't wish that, I am sure?"

Yolande shakes her head, and a smothered convulsive sob is his answer.

"You don't wish to punish me for my unfortunate involuntary wrong towards you quite so severely, I hope?" he continues with his hand laid on her arm—and a pretty little arm it is, Dallas notices—a slim girlish pink-white arm, which he feels an almost irrepressible longing to kiss. "If I met a woman before I met you, or heard of you, or saw you, and loved her first, you can scarcely lay it to my charge as a wilful wrong, can you?"

"No," Yolande answers, listening only too gladly and eagerly to the dear voice which persuades her. "It was not that. I did not blame you for loving her," in a pitiful trembling whisper. "She is very pretty and elegant and attractive, I know well. But, if you had only told me the truth plainly and frankly. If you hadn't led me to believe that you cared for me."

"But I did care for you, Yolande," he declares, smiling, and slipping his arm around her waist. "I shouldn't have married you, if I had not thought you were a sweet, lovable, ladylike girl whom I felt proud and pleased to call my wife, and with whom I hoped to spend many happy years."

Captain Glynne's fair handsome head is resting on hers, with its coils of silken brown hair, and his right hand meets his left amongst the laces and ribbons at Yolande's waist.

It is rather droll, this wooing of one's own wife; but it is an experience by no means lacking in pleasantness or piquancy, Dallas admits.

"But, if my wife's pride is going to punish me for another woman's falsehood," he continues softly, pressing his lips to her forehead—"going to condemn me to loneliness and desolation for the rest of my days—married and divorced, with a wife and no wife—why, I must only endure it as best I can."

"Oh, Dallas, oh, Dallas," Yolande cries, with a convulsive sob, quite heart-wrung by this mournful picture of a joyless existence. "Oh, no, oh, no, my darling. Oh, my darling, I'll stay with you and comfort you as much as I can."

"You'll not forsake me then, love?" Captain Glynne asks plaintively, as they sit side by side opposite to the now blazing fire.

His young wife's arms are round his neck, and she is clinging to him in a passion of tender protectiveness, as if to save him from the horrible fate that menaces him.

"You won't leave me alone in misery and temptation, dearest, will you?" he murmurs, pressing a kiss on Yolande's warm cheek.

He smiles to himself to think how easy and complete, after all, has been his victory over his little rebel wife.

"I should have taken this tone with her from the first," he thinks, blaming himself. "I should have had a pleasanter honeymoon I daresay, and so would she, if I had humored her a little. She is easy enough to manage, poor little girl."

"No, no," Yolande says, in answer to his question, her slender arms tightening their hold of him. "I'll stay. I won't leave you my darling. You won't stay very long here, will you?"

For Joyce Murray's fair, winsome face, with her curling lip and sarcastic smile, rises before her like a vision of evil.

A chill comes over her in the warm glow of her freshly-kindled hopes and happiness, and a heavy sigh rises to the lips her husband kisses.

He has loved Joyce Murray—nay, he loves her now, though he tries, because he is married, to quell his love.

Nothing can undo that or alter it. Joyce Murray has his first, best love—that is an irrevocable fact.

"Not very long, I suppose, in any case," Dallas replies. "Until after the poor old Earl is gone, you know, dear."

And Yolande wonders vaguely, with the selfish hopefulness of youth, how long it will be ere the last sands of the old man's life will have run out.

Dallas, trembling between hope and fear, wonders whether the Earl has put his name down in his will for a lump sum, or for the regular allowance which is paid to him from the estate, as it was to his father before him.

He has a good many debts, which, though not individually very serious, are hampering him somewhat, and of which he is most unwilling that the existence should come to the knowledge of Yolande or her trustees.

The small sum of two hundred a year, which is his allowance for pocket-money under his marriage-settlement until Yolande inherits her uncle's and aunt's fortunes, will be forestalled for years to clear off these debts, unless the Earl has remembered him with a stray thousand pounds or so.

"Dallas, you won't be angry, will you, if I say something?" Yolande whispers faltering, flushing, and creeping closer to him.

"No, dear; I hope not," Dallas answers, guessing what is coming.

"You won't make me so miserable again as I have been to-day, will you?" she pleads humbly and tenderly, caressing his hand, but not venturing to look up into his face. "I have been so unhappy to-day, oh, so unhappy dear."

"Jealous?" and Dallas smiles, as he chucks her under the chin. "No, dear, I'll give you no real cause for unhappiness on that score. I can't answer for imaginary causes, you know."

"I shall not make unhappiness for myself without a very real cause, Dallas," Yolande says, with a sigh.

"You shall have no real cause, my darling," Dallas assures her affectionately, but wondering at the same time, with grim amusement, how he will contrive to keep Yolande and Joyce on good terms with him and each other while they all remain under the same roof.

"I almost wish, upon my word, that Yolande would go up to London in the morning," he thinks. "I have a presentiment that mischief will come of her visit here. I have felt it all along."

"Well, I won't worry you about imaginary grievances, my dearest," jealous Yolande says fondly, her pale face lighting up anew with happy hope, as she dutifully kisses her lord's hand in gratitude for his goodness to her.

As she does so, she misses one well-known gewgaw from the slender fingers.

"Where is that beautiful red cameo ring, Dallas," she asks—"that one I admire so much? You haven't lost it, I hope?"

"No, oh, no," Dallas answers quickly, with rather over-done carelessness of tone; and involuntarily, as he is startled into remembrance, he puts his hand to his vest-pocket to feel if the other ring is safe.

"Is it there?" Yolande asks, smiling, nestling closer, and playfully twining her fingers within his, as she thinks how she will take the ring from him, put it on his finger formally, repeat a passage from the marriage-service over it, and say—"Now Dallas, we are married over again!"

"Don't," he says irritably and sharply, pushing her hand away. "No, no! It isn't here!"

And he is so startled to find that Joyce's ring is not in the vest-pocket, where he thought he had placed it, that he loses his presence of mind.

He looks about on the carpet eagerly, then hurriedly thrusts his fingers into a pocket on the right side of his vest, and, getting somewhat distracted, jerks the ring up for a moment into the light, as he gropes after it.

The diamonds, catching the firelight, emit a scintillating ray, and Yolande sees it.

"Oh, Dallas, what is that?" she asks, with open-eyed amazement. "A diamond ring! Oh, it is a splendid one, I know! Do let me see it, dear! It is yours, isn't it?"

"No—that is—it isn't mine—it's only a friend's—lent to me—at least, to take to the jeweler's when I go up to town. Something's the matter with the setting of one of the stones," Dallas stammers confusedly, as he starts up and walks over to his dressing-case.

"Even so, why may I not look at it for a moment?" Yolande asks very quietly, a strange benumbed feeling creeping over her.

For, as by a lightning-flash, all is revealed to her.

As she stands there, her angered spirit clearly perceives what her husband is trying to conceal from her.

An icy shudder of wrath and excitement shakes her from head to foot.

"You might let me see it?" she persists in a very cold, quiet voice, following him.

"Well, there," he says, handing it to her in sullen desperation; and Yolande examines the ring attentively in silence.

"It is a beautiful ring," she remarks at length, handing it back to him—"a beautiful ring, and I should think a valuable one. You got that to-day in exchange for yours, I saw your red cameo ring on at breakfast-time. This is a pledge of future fidelity from your lady-love, I suppose?"

There is not a trace of anger or excitement in her voice.

She even laughs—a cold mirthless laugh—though a grayish pallor like that of death overspreads her face to the very lips.

Dallas, in his mortification and regret, cannot find a word to say.

He is ashamed of himself, angry with Yolande, and humbled before her, who has trusted and loved him only too well.

And Yolande, seeing that he has not a word to say in his own defence, turns away with a disdainful smile and shrug of the shoulders.

"Rather a hopeless thing for poor Miss Murray, if she is waiting for my death," she says deliberately. "We are both rather young, you see, and she is five years older than I. Thank you for a pleasant visit."

She laughs as she turns the handle of the door of her room.

Dallas, who has been standing stock-still, now starts forward, panting with excitement.

"Come back," he cries hurriedly. "Yolande, do you hear me? Come back, I tell you!"

"No, thank you," she replies, with a slight scornful laugh, closing the door. But the next moment it is snatched back from her hand, and her husband stands in the doorway, his eyes lurid with rage and excitement.

"Yolande," he says slowly, "if you leave me now in anger and jealousy, refusing any explanation or any apology for—for—what has annoyed you, and attributing the worst motives to me, I tell you once and for all it is the last time that you and I shall be more than strangers to each other! You have had your innings, and have treated me with unwifely disobedience and injustice since the day we were married—it is my turn now! I have pleaded with you for your affection and for forgiveness for the trouble I caused you; now I tell you I will put up with your disdain and coldness, your airs and tempers, no longer—I am tired of them!"

"And I am tired of putting up with your neglect and unkindness, and your insulting admiration and preference for another woman—vaunted before my face, and carried to the utmost lengths behind my back!" retorts Yolande, reckless and desperate.

Dallas bites his lips to prevent his uttering stronger words than hers.

"You have heard what I said, Yolande," he says, speaking quietly, but with difficulty. "If you leave my room now, you shall never enter it again with my permission; you and I shall be strangers to the end of our lives, unless you come back to me now as my submissive wife."

"I am to be your 'submissive wife' and Joyce Murray your beloved sweetheart!" Yolande sneers, though it appears to her she is thrusting a knife into her own heart as she utters the taunting words. "No; not if you went down on your knees to me!"

"I have not the slightest intention of going on my knees to you," Dallas rejoins. "This is final, then. Good night, and—good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" Yolande says, very bravely shutting the door and locking it with a decisive click.

CHAPTER XXI.

YOLANDE shuts the door between her husband and herself, and stands defiant, palpitating, smiling, flushed from her miserable victory, for the space of five minutes.

Then she shivers as she looks all round the big, cold, gloomy room—her "mausoleum," as Dallas called it—and sighs—a weary despairing sigh that is almost a moan.

"I am so wretched!" she murmurs, and bursts into tears.

She is standing close to the door still, and, laying her head against the wall, she sobs aloud.

Dallas is sure to hear her, and sure, of course, to knock at the door to ask her what is the matter.

Five minutes later, Yolande is exhausted by her fit of weeping, and is shivering violently; but no notice is taken of her misery.

Then she sits down and listens for a short time.

She can hear Captain Glynne moving about his room; by-and-by there is silence, and she can see the warm glow of the firelight through the key-hole and beneath the door.

He is in bed and sleeping comfortably; and every one in the house has retired, for it is close upon midnight, and there is not a sound to be heard but the mournful wailing of the wind and the passionate beat of the rain in gusts against the windows, while in a distant stableyard a house-dog howls loud and long.

Yolande begins to think of the old Earl on his death-bed, and to wonder whether the fading life will flicker out before the dawning of the next day, and how he will look when he is dead and lying in solemn state in his coffin, until superstitious terrors begin to creep over her, and the shadowy corners of her large room seem filled with misty shapes of horror.

Oh to see Dallas now! Oh to hear his voice and feel the warm clasp of his dear hand!

He is her wedded husband, her very own and not Joyce Murray's; and she will seek him humbly, meekly, dutifully—his "submissive wife"—as he has told her she shall be.

"So I will," she says, abandoning all her high and haughty resolves, her coldness and disdain, without a second thought, all other feelings overborne by and submerged in her sudden passionate yearning for a sight of her husband's face. "Let him be angry with me, or blame, or punish me if he likes. He has a right, the best right in the world to make me obey him, my own, dear, married love!" she whispers to herself, trembling in mingled hope and fear.

She will confess all her faults to him most humbly, she resolves; she will ask his forgiveness if she has wronged him.—aye, on her knees, if he bids her; she will conquer his anger and his coldness by the meekness of her obedience, the warmth of her love.

She will ask him to kiss her and tell him she cannot know sleep or rest estranged so cruelly from him.

So she softly knocks at the door, and, finding there is no response—ah, cruel Dallas, to have fallen placidly asleep while she is in such unrest and wretchedness—gently turns the key in the lock, and tries to open the door.

Even the sound of his voice will comfort her; even to hear him say, "Good night, Yolande," in pleasant tones will be happiness.

She tries to open the door; but it is bolted on the inside, and the lock, being an old one, rattles.

"Who is there?" Dallas calls sharply, in a half awake and very cross voice.

Yolande's first impulse is to fly from the door and be silent; then comes over her again the renewed longing to speak to him.

"It is I, dear, Yolande," she answers in very unsteady, husky tones.

She is terrified to hear him leap out of bed, muttering angrily, and pushing the chairs about as he searches for his dressing-gown.

"Oh, it's no matter, never mind! Oh, please don't disturb yourself, dear!" Yolande calls in subdued tones, in an agony of regret and shame and vexation at her sentimental folly.

But her exclamation only has the effect of making Captain Glynne execrate first his slippers, then the fender, as he strikes his

foot against it.

Limping violently across the room, he unbolts the door with ill-tempered haste.

"What on earth's the matter?" he demands. "What is wrong? Yolande what o'clock is it? What do you want?"

"Nothing, dear," Yolande says deprecatingly, wishing almost that the ground might open and swallow her up. "Only I did not know you were asleep, Dallas dear. I would not have disturbed you if I had thought you were asleep."

"What is it? What is the matter, for Heaven's sake?" Dallas cries irately, shivering. "Just as I was in my first sleep, too! What are you sitting up for until this hour?" he asks more crossly, as he perceives that she is still wearing her dinner-dress, with her warm vicuna shawl wrapped around her.

"Because I could not go to sleep, Dallas," Yolande replies tenderly, laying her little ice-cold fingers on his hand, glowing with life and warmth, "until I asked you to forgive me if I wronged you, and to be friends with me—oh, my darling!"

"Good gracious," Dallas exclaims, in wrathful accents. "Is it possible you woke me up in the dead of night and disturbed me in this manner for such infernal nonsense! I wish to goodness you had one ounce of common-sense! You behaved most improperly to me last night—to-night—whatever time it is—and I told you that your conduct would make our separation final if you did not alter it! You didn't choose to alter it, so you must take the consequences!" and he yawns violently and shivers again, being, in fact, in that sleepy condition of mental confusion and irritability in which a member of the nobler sex cannot reasonably be expected to be saintly in word or deed, having been unduly disturbed by the wife of his bosom.

"Oh, Dallas," Yolande pleads, with a stifled cry, clinging to him, "don't speak so cruelly to me! Oh, my love, I could bear it no longer, I grew so miserable and desolate and nervous, thinking of the poor old Earl's death; and I thought I should like to speak to you for a minute, not knowing you were asleep, dear."

"If you are nervous, why didn't you have your maid to sleep in your room?" Dallas asks curtly, freeing himself from the clasp of her arms. "I can ring for her now if you wish. It is past twelve, I see, and of course in a country household like this everybody was asleep long ago; but that doesn't matter, I suppose."

"No, no. I don't want Pitts! I would not disturb her on any account," Yolande says hurriedly, shrinking away, but gazing at him pitifully.

"I wish you had been as considerate for me," Dallas rejoins harshly. "You should have gone to bed long ago, and not have sat up giving way to superstitious fancies!"

He tells himself that it is only right to reprove her sternly for such childish behavior, and to give her a smart reminder that she has forfeited her right to worry and disturb him, since, by the decree of her fierce, foolish jealousy, they are to be strangers.

And then, although he feels a pang of misgiving at the sight of the wan young face, the large dark piteous eyes gazing longingly after him from the gloomy background of the huge dimly-lit room, he shuts the door, and leaves her alone—alone, to weep through the live-long night, to sit there in the cold and darkness, when the candles burn out about two o'clock.

The desolate, timid girl, a stranger amongst strangers, sick and faint with nervous terrors, apart from her other misery, crouches in an arm-chair, wrapped in her shawl, until

"Cold winds wake the gray-eyed morn.'

Then, to preserve appearances, Yolande takes off her pretty black-lace and amber-satin dress, which she put on with such innocent pleasure and vanity, and, wrapping herself in a warm flannel dressing-gown, creeps shudderingly into the snowy depths of the huge ice-cold bed.

There, in spite of cold and misery, she falls into a deep sleep of exhaustion. Pitts wakes her at half-past eight.

"I have caught a bad cold, I think, and don't feel well enough to go down this morning, Pitts," she tells the maid, who acquiesces, with a glance at her young mistress's swollen eye-lids. "And, after breakfast, you must pack my trunks, Pitts," Yolande continues, with a vain attempt to speak clearly and pleasantly. "I shall return to London to-day."

"I thought you would," Pitts says to herself.

"Captain Glynne and I arranged it last night," she goes on, in a business-like tone, "and decided that it was better I should go back to Rutland Gardens, and stay there until he can leave Pentreath."

"I wonder when that will be," Pitts thinks indignantly. "When that Miss Murray goes, I suppose. Oh, the falseness of men! And she hasn't a bit of spirit, poor little thing, to stand up for herself! Catch me puttin' up with a husband like that!"

After breakfast comes an ordeal which Yolande dreads and shrinks from, but to which she is obliged to submit in her helplessness and friendlessness—a visit from mademoiselle, the meek dependant, who, while ostensibly Lady Maria's nurse and companion, is in reality the mistress of the house and every one in it.

She glides in, in her pale-gray gown and her Puritan bands and kerchief, with a set bright smile and sweet words of sympathy.

With downcast eyelids, she hears all Yolande has to say, acquiesces meekly, and arranges everything for her immediate departure without one unpleasant comment or question.

Indeed Yolande wishes vexedly more than once that Mademoiselle Isabelle, as she is called in the Pentreath household, would evince some little natural surprise and inquisitiveness on the subject of this sudden journey, this parting of a newly-married pair; but mademoiselle seems possessed only with the idea that Yolande has caught a bad influenza cold, and is obliged to go post-haste to London to nurse herself.

"And of course, no matter what poor Captain Glynne's feelings may be at having to part with you, cherie, your health and comfort are his first consideration," mademoiselle says, with a solemn shake of the head and a plaintive smile, which to Yolande appears like a sardonic grin. "We must try to keep him from feeling lonely, dear," she adds softly, "though I don't suppose any of us could succeed in doing that"—with another serious shake of the head.

"I couldn't resist that one small joke at her expense," mademoiselle says to herself laughing heartily, "when I fully expect and intend that he and Joyce Murray will flirt to their hearts' content all day long and every day, now that 'the green-eyed monster' — poor Yolande — is out of the way!"

And she hurries off to announce to Lady Maria and the Viscount, who is paying his duty visit, Mrs. Dallas Glynne's intended departure.

She smooths the way, explaining and arranging everything so deftly that, when Yolande is dressed, she nothing to do but to say "Good-bye" to every one, including her husband.

Lady Maria is very kind and full of sympathy for Yolande's evident illness, and urges her, when in London, to see a favorite "specialist" of hers—Doctor Sutheley Smith.

"For one cannot be too careful, dear, of one's precious, precious health!" Lady Maria says, swallowing a nauseous reddish-hued dose.

Yolande then hurries down to the hall, where the carriage is waiting.

"Please tell Captain Glynne I am going now," says quickly to one of the footmen.

He has gone to the stables, and the message does not reach him for some little time.

He is utterly confounded, but incredulous until he sees the carriage actually piled with luggage and his wife and her maid sitting inside.

His face pales visibly, and his eyes glitter as he comes forward and puts his hands upon the carriage-door. But he smiles quite pleasantly, though coldly.

"I did not think you intended going until the afternoon," he says carelessly. "Williams, fetch my overcoat!"

"You—you are not coming?" Yolande asks, flushing and frowning, and trying to speak very coldly, whilst her heart is bounding with joy.

"I am going to the station with you, of course," he answers, his eyes flashing. "I can't escort you all the way, as I explained to you last night, you know."

"Oh, yes, very well," Yolande replies, in an indifferent tone. "Will you have room, or shall Pitts go outside?"

"Plenty of room," he says curtly, detaining Pitts, who is alighting with an armful of small luggage.

A few words more, about the time of the trains and so forth, they speak; but not a tone or glance is exchanged that might not pass between utter strangers until the station is reached.

When she is seated in the railway-car, there is a few minutes' grace; and Yolande hopes for even a few words of reproach in her husband's farewell.

But Captain Glynne is deeply offended, and betrays it only in his icily-polite attention to his wife's comfort.

He buys her books and papers, sees that she has a foot-warmer, and begs the guard handsomely to be attentive. Then he strolls to and fro until the last bell rings, when he steps into the car, and, as Pitts is looking on, puts his arm round his wife's waist, and just brushes her cheek with his moustache in a cold semblance of a kiss.

"Good-bye—take care of yourself!" he says, stepping out on to the platform. "Good-bye, Pitts."

The whistle sounds, and he smiles pleasantly, raising his hat as he turns on his heel.

Yolande, as she gazes wildly after his retreating figure and the train glides swiftly on, feels now, when it is all too late, in a spasm of agony that seems to suffocate her, that it is by her own act and deed that she is thus divorced from her newly-wedded husband—her love whom she loves but too well—it may be for long desolate years, it may be forever!

CHAPTER XXII.

CAPTAIN GLYNNE walks away from the platform without so much as casting a farewell glance at his young wife; but he sends the carriage home without him, and, lighting a cigar, walks slowly back the mile and a half to Pentreath.

Bitter and dreary thoughts are his during that lonely walk; Yolande is avenged for his cold repulses of her last night, if she could only now see his heart.

The sullen rain-clouds of yesterday are hanging low over the wet cold-hued landscape; it is far more like a day in "drear November" than in "the sweet springtime;" and Dallas feels as wretched as the day is, desponding as he plods on his solitary way.

"It has been 'a slight mistake'—that is all," he says, smiling bitterly—"like a good many other marriages. I thought she was a gentle patient girl, but she is not. She thought I was a tame sentimental fool, and is disgusted to find I am not. I thought I was getting a wife to love me and comfort me: and, instead of that, I have bound myself for life to a jealous young termagant, who treats me to a furious scene, from a melodrama on any and every occasion."

He stops to think for a moment here in his angry reverie, and conscience, by no means deadened, reminds him of the impassioned clasp of loving arms, of the love-light in her dark passionate eyes, the truth and the tenderness of her cry of devotion, and the promise never to leave him which she sealed with the kisses of her pure lips. His eyes soften, his face flushes faintly with a glow of pleasant emotion.

"She is a jealous young termagant though!" he mutters, half laughing. "But I will say this—I don't believe I should easily tire of Yolande, even if everything went smoothly with us; and I do believe she loves me desperately, poor little girl!"

He is nearly back at Pentreath Place now, and, with a curious desolate sense of loss, he frowns as he looks at it.

Jealous, loving, angry, tender Yolande is not there to smile or to frown at him; and a pang seems to go through his very heart as he thinks how she would have met him—with dark eyes and soft tremulous lips of rapturous delight—if he had not driven her and her love away.

"But there is one thing I will not endure," he tells himself, his brow clouding again; "and that is, Yolande doing just as she pleases in everything, in direct defiance of me and my wishes, and leading this highly independent life because of girlish whim. I will follow her to London as soon as all this is over, and insist on her obedience on her living with me as other docile wives live with their husbands, when once I get those confounded debts paid and things on a proper footing," Dallas decides firmly. "I will not allow my little lady any more of this free and untrammelled existence. She has married me, and she loves me, and she must learn to obey me! The Earl would never be so shabby as not to leave me at least a thousand," he muses uneasily, "and, mean and grasping as Lyulph is, he could never grudge me a paltry sum like that—rich as a Jew as he is too. I must have a talk, a serious talk, and a large slice of 'humble pie' along with it, I suppose, with Lyulph this very evening," he muses. "He is not all bad, I daresay, though I have never heard any good of him. I will tell him frankly how I stand, and now, when I have given up soldiering and sent in my papers, I am not going to settle down to spend the rest of my days in idleness. He and old Dormer between them ought to be able to put me up to something good in the City or out of it;" and he goes indoors feeling so ready to have that "serious talk" and that "humble pie" repast that it is with surprise and satisfaction that he receives a message from the Viscount, who wishes to see Captain Glynne in his private room.

"I don't think I have ever been favored by an invitation to walk into your parlor before, Viscount," he observes, with a glance around the small dingy room, which is lumbered and crammed with a huge heavy old escritoire and book-case, and a marble-topped table supporting a massive lamp, which is pushed untidily back against a screen that leans against the wall, having no room to stand properly.

"No?" the Viscount says, with a sour contortion of his face and a glimmer of an evil smile in his eyes. "Why that quotation, I should like to know? I certainly shouldn't bother to play spider to you?"

The words are sufficiently insulting; the tone is worse.

"What do you want of me?" Dallas asks coldly and curtly, forgetting the "humble pie" altogether.

"I want to ask you what you mean by offering an insult to my guests?" the Viscount demands, with a snarl. "If you and your wife can't agree together, you might—at least, while you remained in my house—have refrained from letting your admiration of another lady be so marked as to be an insult to that lady—yes, an insult to her! I repeat it, sir," the Viscount says sternly, confronting Dallas with a severe judicial aspect.

Dallas, fairly paralysed with rage and astonishment, stands gazing at him in silence.

"Your conduct has driven your wife to leave Pentreath this morning," the Viscount resumes, with a menacing tone and an ugly lowering frown: "and, as you know quite well, a step like that on the part of a wife means deadly injury to a young girl's reputation—her spotless reputation, sir," the Viscount adds fiercely, raising his voice, "which you would sacrifice to your vanity!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE CHECK REIN.—A horse with its head free can draw a load more easily and increase the leverage by lowering its head. A tight check will almost bring on paralysis in the neck, and it must be exceedingly painful to keep the muscles and cords strained to one tension all of the time. It is cruel. If people are fools enough to torture themselves at the caprice of fashion, for the sake of humanity, don't torture the animals put in your care. It is not any the less a sin because a dumb beast is the victim. Cruelty is cruelty anywhere.

Scientific and Useful.

IRON CEMENT.—The oxide of iron is one of the most adhesive cements for iron. With this a joint can be made so perfect that the iron will break before the cement will part. It is mixed with sulphur and sal-ammoniac moistened with water.

ARTIFICIAL LEATHER.—Artificial leather is being prepared in Germany by combining with the skins from 5 to 10 per cent. of sinews. Pieces of leather are washed, cut, boiled in alkaline lye, torn, neutralized with hydrochloric acid, and washed once more, to remove all traces of acid. To this are added sinews, which are treated similarly, and steamed in an acid bath until they are somewhat like glue. The materials are then mixed, pressed into sheets, moistened on both sides with a concentrated solution of alum, and the upper surface receives a thin coat of caoutchouc in solution with carbon bisulphide.

ELECTRIC HEAT.—Electrical heating stoves are being introduced in France, a peculiar feature of their construction being that the wires are let through apertures formed in plates of refractory clay and plumbago. These plates are not enclosed, but are left exposed, so that the air can circulate very freely through the apertures, where it comes in contact with the red-hot wires. Wire bobbins are inserted in the apertures, each bobbin forming part of the electric current, and which is connected for quantity; the bobbins are heated by the passage of the current, and serve to heat the air as it passes to and fro over them.

BOTTLE-RINSING.—Bottles after being some time in use are apt to acquire a crust or coating very difficult to remove by ordinary rinsing. The following are methods for removing such impurities. (1) Soak them in permanganate of potash; (2) rinse the bottles out with a solution of equal parts of muriatic acid and water; (3) chloride of lime and water in the proportion of one ounce of the lime to two pints of water, and allow the bottles to lie in the solution for three or four days; (4) strong sulphuric acid may be put into the bottles—this should remove the strongest crust. All these methods require great care. The chemical should in all cases be carefully rinsed out with clean water, and it should be borne in mind that all acids are extremely injurious to clothes, &c.

MUSTARD PLASTERS.—The ordinary way of making is to mix the mustard with water, tempering it with a little flour, but such a plaster as that makes it simply abominable. Before it has half done its work it begins to blister the patient, and leaves him finally with a painful flayed spot, after having produced far less effect in a beneficial way than was intended. Now a mustard plaster should never make a blister at all. If a blister is wanted, there are other plasters far better than mustard plaster; then, use no water, but mix the mustard with the white of an egg, and the result will be the plaster will "draw" perfectly, but will not produce a blister on the skin of an infant, no matter how long it is allowed to remain on the part.

Farm and Garden.

SCALY LEGS.—Kerosene will cure the scaly legs on fowls. Anoint the legs once a week with kerosene for three or four weeks and the legs will become perfectly clean.

LIGHT.—Cows need light, not only for their own health and comfort but because good butter cannot be made from the milk of cows kept in dark stables. Air, light, cleanliness, warmth are four essentials of a cow stable where cows are kept for profit.

NOW.—Cut out the lower limbs from the evergreen trees if too thick. Trim the hedges and get them in shape. This is an excellent season for repairing the fences and buildings. If deferred, the spring with its hurry will allow no time for such work.

UNSIGHTLY.—A compost heap is rather unsightly, but if placed in the back yard or behind the barn, it will not annoy any one. Tops form beets, cabbage leaves, and other refuse matter should be thrown on this heap; all will help to make a valuable pile of manure which can be utilized in the spring.

PLANTS.—To grow plants well it is necessary to study them. If you will do this you will soon find out what treatment they need, and you will do this if you love flowers. If you do not love them, and try to grow them simply because it is "the style" to have plants in the house, the sooner you give up the attempt the better, for you will never succeed in having good plants. Be sure of that.

SLOW MILKERS.—A slow milker should never be allowed to touch a cow. If a cow milks easily, a good milker should be able to get all the milk in five minutes, and he will get more than a person who takes ten minutes to do the same work. If a cow cannot be milked rapidly, she is better for the butcher than the dairy, and the sooner she is fatted the better for the farm.

AN EMERY-WHEEL.—Take a solid wheel of pine or any similar wood, and of the proper size; turn the wheel true; then prepare some best glue, and, using it hot and thin, put it on the surface of the wheel with a brush. The first coat of glue should be a light one, and when it is dry, a second one should be applied, and, as quickly as possible, as much emery should be sifted upon the wet surface as the glue will hold. When this is dry, another coat of glue and emery should be applied.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST
FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

PHILADELPHIA, JANUARY 8, 1887.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

(IN ADVANCE.)

1 Copy One Year	$2 00
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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Publication Office, 728 Sansom St.

TO FRIENDS AND READERS.

We hope that those of our friends and readers who are kindly in the habit of getting up clubs for THE POST, will enter the field as soon as possible this year and try to at least double their old lists. We are hoping to get a great many large-sized clubs for the coming year, and trust every one of our present subscribers will make an extra effort to secure one or more new friends for us.

THE POST is much lower in price than any other first-class family paper in the country, and we think it only needs to be laid before the community to be subscribed for at once by thousands to whom it may still be a stranger, save, perhaps, by reputation. Of course we must depend in a great degree upon our present subscribers, friends and readers to show THE POST to their acquaintances and neighbors, and to speak a good word in our behalf. Their return for such efforts must be the pleasure they give to others, the consciousness of assisting in the good work of circulating THE POST, and enabling us to make it better, more useful and entertaining than ever before. Will they try and do it for us? Let each of our present friends and subscribers try to get one new subscriber at least.

Sample copies for the purpose will be sent to those who wish them.

Life's Smaller Ills.

What are popularly known as the "fidgets" are generally included among life's smaller ills. It may seem to be a trifling subject to waste good ink upon, but we shall endeavor to show that it is worthy of the most talented and sharp pointed pen in the land.

For there is scarcely a family that has not suffered and is not suffering daily from this pest. Riches do not exempt from its attacks more than poverty, nor culture of mind more than "blissful ignorance." It is a widespread plague, and its victims mostly bear their pangs unseen. Their martyrdom is the more heroic in that no applauding and admiring crowds stimulate their courage when it begins to fail, and they are martyred for no noble cause which would make the pangs sweet to bear.

As a rule the oldest member of the household is the party who inflicts the torture. Day by day he or she (more frequently she) pricks the little sharp pins into the soft, shrinking flesh with callous indifference, resenting the slightest expression of uneasiness or pain on the part of the hapless sufferer.

Who has not seen the strength and spirit of a daughter, for instance, decreasing under the torture until at middle age but a poor, worn-out, listless creature is left of a bright, hopeful girl! And "oh, the pity of it!" that the public do not understand, nor even the most intimate friend realize, the pain and weariness, and therefore come and go on the most cordial terms with the Inquisitor, and even grow tired of the uninteresting victim. Indeed, they will turn with virtuous indignation on her if at any much tried moment she gives utterance to some bitter word or look.

And even she herself, weakened and beset as she is, does not fully know the power of the little pins. She thinks they are only little pins, and half despises herself for feeling their pricks; but she forgets that they come in myriads, and have no mercy nor time of rest.

But a great blow from the strong hand of stern Sorrow, or a sharp thrust from the sword of cruel Misfortune, or imprisonment in the uneasy bed of Sickness, would be far more easily borne than this most subtly agonizing trial of—fidgets.

The fidgety member invariably considers herself (we will use the feminine pronoun for convenience) the only active, capable individual in the household. She therefore gives orders to all the others; and generally those orders are either unwise or contradictory, or a dozen are given in case of one.

Her mind being quite incapable of comprehending the impossibility of remembering or reconciling these (especially under a fire of small talk), she is angry if the latest command is not instantly obeyed. The family is held to be contumacious and disrespectful forthwith, and then follows a domestic "scene." And each one of these "scenes" weakens the respect and affection of the members to one another, and surely prepares the way for hard and bitter thoughts that will not readily ever again yield the sweet fruits of loving self-sacrifice.

It proceeds in general from pure selfishness and contempt for the claims of others; and also from overweening conceit, and the old-fashioned idea that a man may "do as he likes with his own" family.

Happily in this generation parents are beginning to study their children, and to believe and realize the fact of their distinct individuality.

Formerly it was too common to consider them only as reflections — imperfect—of their own perfect virtue, and to expect thorough agreement in taste and feeling on all subjects.

Let a young person grow up humble-minded and just, taking at all times a full share of a family's duties and responsibilities, and there is little fear of undue fidgetiness being developed with mature years.

Of course there are exceptional cases caused by constitutional infirmity or old age, and for these we should show the utmost tenderness and make excuses very readily. But we refer in our remarks at present to those idle, selfish, conceited and unreasonable people who are hopelessly blind to their own shortcomings and utterly careless of the rights of those unhappily connected with them.

These form the bulk of the fidgety folks, who are a nuisance to all belonging to them.

Let "society" shun them, or show them the cold shoulder, or frankly give them its opinion of them; and then possibly they may "tak' a thocht an' mend," as the Scottish poet says of the Arch-Enemy.

With this wish we will give up thinking of them for the time being, as the subject, perhaps, tempts one not to do them full justice; therefore, young people, take a parting word, and see that you cultivate the "calm repose," if not of Lady Clara Vere de Vere, of a reasonable, sober-minded, thoughtful human being.

KEEP in good humor. It is not the great calamities that embitter existence. It is the petty vexations, the small jealousies, the little disappointments, the minor miseries, that make the heart heavy and the temper sour. Don't let them. Anger is a pure waste of vitality; it is always foolish, and always disgraceful, except in a few cases, when it is kindled by seeing wrong done to another; and even that noble rage seldom mends the matter. Keep in good humor. The company of a good-humored man is a perpetual feast; he is welcome everywhere. Eyes glisten at his approach, and difficulties vanish in his presence. Franklin's indomitable good nature did as much for his country in the old Congress as Adams' fire or Jefferson's wisdom. He clothed wisdom with smiles, and softened contentious minds into acquiescence. Keep in good humor. A good conscience, a sound stomach, a clean skin, are the elements of good humor. Get them and keep them, and—be sure to keep in good humor.

ALL need in every relation of life, not less conscience, but more than now; not that its authority be diminished, but that its domain be extended. It is not merely a director for moments of action or decision; it should be a constant guide, urging every man to think rightly as well as to act rightly, and, to that end, to enlighten his mind, increase his knowledge, strengthen his judgment, thus fitting him to pursue the duties and fill the relations of life with ever increasing excellence. Some people are accustomed to speak of conscientiousness and intelligence as if they were something separate; but when the true kingdom of conscience becomes established, it will embrace the growth of intelligence as one of its most important elements.

THE sense of shame is a friend to be cherished. Is any one conscious of having violated a right, or injured a friend, or taken an unfair advantage, or paltered with truth? Let him be thankful that he is ashamed of it, and let him hasten to express that shame by confession and restitution. The one thing which is well-nigh hopeless is the wrong doing that is followed by no shame. All attempts to "bear up" and to appear either innocent of the fault or defiant of the consequences lead directly to the road of moral ruin.

HE who has a good or a great thought is immediately endowed with a trust. It is his duty, and should be his glad effort, to translate it into actual life, to convert it into practical reality, to infuse it into his own character, and to extend the influence to others. If, instead of this, he simply pleases himself with dreamy reveries of possible good, he will not be held guiltless of forfeiting a sacred trust and violating a serious responsibility.

IN every walk of life work is a powerful antidote for low spirits. The busy have no time to be sad. The saying, "Labor is prayer," is never truer than when applied to the grief-stricken; and to those whose woes are more fancied than real, but none the less productive of discomfort on that account, toil will afford a speedier and surer relief than any other remedy ever devised by man. Try hard work then, bodily or mental, or both, as the best cure for a fit of the "blues."

ONLY he who in a spirit of contentment receives gladly the reward of his labor and extracts from it its real value can be said truly to possess it. He may rightfully perhaps desire an increase, but, if so, it is because he knows his labor is worth it; and his efforts to obtain it, guided by a spirit of justice, not of greed, do not betray him into discontent.

THE sound mind in the sound body cannot resist the pleasure of exerting itself, and generally for good. Such persons enjoy their life and are naturally punctual in their work or play, because they perceive that time is life and is too valuable to be wasted.

WE may teach rules of right conduct, and explain clearly their reasons and foundations, but, unless we can stimulate the moral sense of a child or a man to voluntary exercise, we cannot hope to form or to reform character.

"GOD giveth grace to the humble." He pours it out plentifully on humble hearts. His sweet dews and showers slide off the mountains, and fall on the low valley of humble hearts and make them pleasant and fertile.

A CHILD who grows up loving good books is saved from many temptations that beset the empty-minded. He can always find a good companion; he need never be lonely.

THE timid and weak are the most revengeful and implacable.

The World's Happenings.

Russia is advertising for 2,000,000 pairs of boots.

Horseback exercise is ultra-fashionable for New York ladies this season.

One Australian farmer has shot, trapped and poisoned 15,000 rabbits in the last year.

The Chinese population of New York is about four thousand. They mostly engage in washing.

During the present year there have been seven embezzlements in Boston, which aggregated $1,223,000.

Hot, dry flannels applied to the face and neck are a very effective remedy for a "jumping toothache."

Although our army is not increasing, its expensiveness is, according to the report of the Secretary of War.

In Oregon a man has to take out a license which costs him $5 a year, permitting saloonkeepers to sell him drinks.

Nearly 6,000,000 hogs died of disease in the United States during the year 1886—out of a total of about 46,000,000.

Without a miss a marksman broke 105 glass balls at 25 yards each on a wager at Keyport, N. J., a few days ago.

A pet monkey, apparently with malice prepense, hanged a dog by the neck until he was dead, in Seabright, N. J., recently.

Light-haired people, it is said, have about one-third more hairs on the head and are less liable to become bald than those with dark hair.

A teacher in one of the Jersey City public schools is to be arraigned on a charge of ridiculing the poverty of the poorer members of her class.

A confidential clerk of a wealthy coal-dealer in Chicago embezzled $100,000 from his employer, and the employer good-humoredly forgives him.

At a wedding breakfast not long ago in New York, the bride's brother officiated as an amateur photographer, and took an excellent picture of the scene.

An Oakland, Cal., paper in referring to the death of a citizen recently said that he had "gone to a happier home." And now the widow threatens a libel suit.

It is estimated now that every year some 5,000,000,000 letters are posted in the world. America leads with about 2,500,000,000, and England follows with 1,700,000,000.

A wicked boy put a placard on the back of a car seat which contained a lovesick couple, one evening last week, on the Erie road. It read: "We are just married."

Pure milk is ensured to the inhabitants of Havana, in the Island of Cuba, by the milkman bringing his cows with him and drawing off at each house the amount required.

It is said that in Campbell county, Dakota, an intelligent pointer dog run by the indignant citizens on an independent ticket, lacked only three votes of being elected District Attorney.

On one street in Bluehill, Me., less than half a mile long, live fifteen widows. There is only one house on the street in which there is not a widow, and that is occupied by two maiden ladies.

Fifty tramps at the Lancaster county, Pa., workhouse went on a strike recently for roast beef, vegetable soup and all the tobacco they want to chew or smoke, but the revolt was quickly subdued.

Sunday concerts are being prohibited in London; the managers of a series lately registered themselves as a religious sect, under the name of "Religious Reconstructionists," in order to evade the law.

Marshal MacMahon, formerly president of the French Republic, now 70 years old, has returned to Paris. He leads a very quiet life. As a mark of respect he has assigned to him two army officers, who compose his staff.

In caring for plants during the winter keep the soil in the pots loose and moist. Keep the foliage free from dust, watering with a fine spray. Once a week use liquid manure; a teaspoonful of ammonia to a pint of water is the least troublesome.

Small foreign bodies may be removed from the eye by placing a grain of flaxseed under the lower lid and closing it. The seed is quickly surrounded by an adherent mucilage which catches the foreign body and carries it out at the angle of the eye.

A peddler who had been given shelter under the roof of Thomas C. Seyfried, in Upper Nazareth, Northampton county, Pa., the other night, interposed between the former and a burglar the same night, and the latter was put to flight when about murdering Seyfried.

A new form of railway seat spring has been devised in England, and is highly spoken of. The entire seat is carried on a coiled spring of peculiar form, and is free to move in all directions, so that every jerk and oscillation which the car can receive is perfectly taken up.

A singular accident is reported to have occurred at Bethany, Cal. The victim was trying to fix a swelled shell in his breech-loading shotgun with his pocket knife, when the shell exploded, driving the knife blade through his hand, making an ugly wound, which may prove fatal.

A young colored man of Buffalo is making money by giving most remarkable musical performances. He holds his mouth open, taps his skull with a beer mallet, and thus plays tunes in tones not unlike those of the xiyophone. He seems not only to have a wooden head but an empty one also.

An inebriated prisoner, on being led into a San Francisco Police Court the other night, declared that he could "buy out this old prison," and as he spoke he slammed a big sack of coin on the prison-keeper's desk. The latter calmly emptied the sack, but as it only panned out $385.50 he refused to sell, and instead gave the capitalist the use of a cell for the night.

IF THIS WERE SO.

BY K. M.

O Love, if I could see you standing here,
  I, to whom the memory of a scene—
This lane, tree-shadowed, with the summer's light
  Falling in golden showers, the boughs between,
Upon your upturned face—shines out as clear,
Against the background dark of many a year,
As yonder solitary starlight bright
Gleams on the storm-clad bosom of the night.

If this were so—if you should come to me
  With your calm, angel face, framed in with gold,
And lay your hand in mine as long ago
  You laid it coldly, would the love untold
Hidden within my heart, set my lips free
To speak of it as I know the certainty
Of love crowned or rejected—yes or no?
O Love, I could not speak if this were so.

But if you came to meet me in the lane
  With footsteps swifter than you used of yore—
And if your eyes grew brighter, dear, as though
  They gladdened at my coming back once more—
If, when I held your little hand again,
Your calmness grew less still, then not in vain
  My heart would strive to speak, for it would know
What words to utter, Love, if this were so!

The Crazy Aunt.

BY E. C. PRICE.

"TWENTY minutes stop!"

The train drew up at Amiens station, in France, bringing to an end a painful talk between two people in a first class car.

"The long and short of it is, Lilla, you will have to put this nonsense out of your head," said Captain Jones, as he opened the door.

He was a good-looking man, with stern eyes and a determined jaw. He might have been at least a dozen years older than his sister, who, however, had defended herself through a course of bullying all the way from Paris.

"You had better come and have some luncheon."

"No," she said; "I don't want any."

"Don't be a goose."

"I'm not hungry. I would rather stay here."

Under any other circumstances Captain Jones would have stuck to his point till he gained it. But in this case it would have meant losing his own luncheon, so he shrugged his shoulders and walked away with the stream of passengers towards the buffet.

Lilla sat quite still in her place. She was a girl of twenty, and might have been a pretty girl if her features and expressions had been a little less decided.

Her eyes were remarkable—large, blue, and grave, with straight brows and dark lashes. She was pale, but her complexion was clear and good.

Sometimes, when she was amiable, she did look very pretty, and at all times she was handsome. She was plainly dressed, and her manner was very cool and straightforward.

Just now she looked anything but happy, paler and graver than usual, frowning slightly and sadly, as she sat all alone by the car window and gazed across the lines at the crowded station.

She could see her brother's broad shoulders disappearing into the buffet, and then thought as she watched him how horribly disagreeable he was. As if a woman of twenty might not decide for herself!

Just personal prejudice, and nothing more. He was so narrow-minded: he thought everybody ought to be made on his own pattern. What could be more ridiculous!

Some sort of dimness, a dimness of vexation, clouded Lilla's eyes as she thought of the long weary argument she had just gone through.

Of course she was not weak-minded enough to cry; but it is terribly hopeless work trying to convince one's brother, or even to make him understand that one means to have one's own way.

After about five minutes in peace, and a strange stillness, for the train was nearly empty, Lilla was startled from her thoughts by a voice which came from the platform below.

"May I ask if this car is full?"

She looked out and saw an elderly woman, carrying a bag and some shawls.

Her voice was breathless and very tired, but there was a curious charm in it, a high sweet tone, and as she lifted anxious eyes to Lilla a very pretty smile lighted up her pale delicate face. She was extremely well dressed, but looked a little dishevelled.

Lilla wondered instinctively what she had done with her maid.

With the unaffected readiness which belonged to her, she instantly made the stranger welcome, took her bag and shawls, and helped her to climb into the car, and thought with satisfaction how disappointed Percy would be, when he came back, to find that his brotherly scoldings could not go on in peace all the way to Boulogne.

"Oh, thank you, how very kind you are!" said the stranger, looking earnestly at Lilla and smiling sweetly. "This is delightful."

I thought I should never get away from that odious place, and the train seemed so very full. There is room for me here, really?" looking round at Percy's scattered belongings with a touch of alarm.

"Yes; there is only my brother," said Lilla.

"How providential! What a place this is to get away from! I never stopped here before; but something happened yesterday in Paris which put me out dreadfully, and I felt too ill, and too cross to start early in the morning, so I came as far as Amiens in the afternoon. Such a stupid thing to do! I had to leave my poor maid in Paris, she was ill—left her with a friend, you know—and then my—well, my escort disappointed me, and I couldn't sleep last night—and really do you know ever since this train came in I have been wandering up and down trying to find a car.

"It is full. I don't know how we managed to get one to ourselves," said Lilla.

"The officials were really very stupid. I asked him to find me a car. First he wanted to put me into the *Dames seules*, which is a thing I can't endure; and then he opened a door where a man was smoking, and when I declined that he shrugged his shoulders and waved his hands—'*Voila le train! Madame peut choisir.*' So I struggled along the platform, actually got into one or two empty cars and out again, because they were so full. No; I am not frish," she said laughing, as she perceived a quiver about Lilla's mouth. "They were full of bags—don't you see?"

"Yes, I see perfectly," Lilla.

"Now, I ought to be very thankful," said the stranger, and she became silent for a few minutes, leaning back in her corner, watching Lilla with her bright expressive eyes, which seemed much younger than her pale face, marked with lines of pain and age.

At a little distance, her slight figure, her eyes and manner, made her look less than forty; she was in reality near sixty.

Lilla was not a very talkative girl. After doing what she could for the lonely lady, and listening with sufficient politeness to her history, she fell back into her own grave silence, and watched the platform till she saw Percy coming back.

The stranger thought, "What a severe face!" The girl is unhappy, I believe; but I like her, too. Now that is the sort of girl——"

Captain Jones's arrival at the door disturbed these meditations. He hesitated a moment, while his sister looked at him gravely. Then he said, "Give me my coat and things, will you? I am going to smoke;" and he took himself off to another car.

When he was gone, the strange lady began again to talk to Lilla, who in spite of herself had to respond to these advances. There was something very pleasant, though not very wise, about her companion, who chattered of France and Paris, and abused England, and said a great many things that Lilla totally disagreed with.

In theory, this strong and sensible girl could not imagin herself enduring a woman like this. It was exactly the kind of woman she disliked and despised—a silly, vain, affected, self-conscious chatterbox, much too young for her age, and altogether ridiculous.

This was Lilla's charitable judgment. She would not confess to herself that there was a mysterious something in the stranger which redeemed all this: but the time went on, and she found that she must meet those quick kind eyes, and smile in answer to that smile, and, in fact, be conquered by such a sunny presence as she did not at present count among the whole of her friends.

What was it? what was it? Why was she obliged to give her sympathy, and even, worse and worse, later on, her confidence, to a foolish, weak-minded, accidental companion like this?

"Oh yes, many of the French manners and customs are most superior to ours," said this lady, talking so fast that Lilla—English to the backbone—could not contradict her. "Their marriages, for instance—how sensible they are! and how happy!"

"No, horrible. I can't bear them!" exclaimed Lilla; but her companion hardly seemed to hear this.

"Of course," she said, "people's friends and relations must know them better than they know themselves. Well, what a comfort not to be allowed to throw themselves away on the first person they take a fancy to. Oh dear, what nonsense! Two silly children without a penny, binding themselves down to a life of misery, finding out too late they don't suit each other in the least. And if they were French everything would be arranged easily and carefully—money and all the rest of it. Frenchmen never make fools of themselves. I wish my nephew was a Frenchman!"

She said this half to herself, and sighed. Then she looked at Lilla. "Yes," she said, "I am in great trouble."

Lilla was looking at her with an earnest interest which was certainly encouraging. There was a kind of wistfulness in her eyes, and she said, "But one's relations don't know what is best for one. I am quite sure of that."

"Well," said the lady after a pause, smiling very prettily, "if I happened to be your grandmother I think we should disagree about that. However, we all speak from our own experience. Now I have a nephew, who at this moment is driving me quite mad by his detestable obstinacy. He has fallen in love with some girl I never saw or heard of, and wants to marry her at once. Now, listen. It is really a relief to me to tell somebody, and I'm sure you are sympathizing and kind."

Lilla shook her head a little, but the stranger smiled and went on.

"I don't want to boast of what I have done for Jack, but I must tell you, that you may judge between us. He has never had any money, and never will have any except what I give him. I paid for his education, which was an utter farce from beginning to end. He never passed a single examination, failed in everything he tried for, simply from idleness, for I don't think he is a fool. Idleness, ingratitude, selfishness. Now he coolly tells me that he is going to be married, and of course expects me to support his wife as well as himself, for she has nothing. Some stray girl he met abroad, no doubt as odious as English girls abroad generally are. Our tempers are neither of them sweet, and I must tell you that Jack and I were very angry with each other. He declared that he expected nothing from me, which was utter falsehood and nonsense. So we wished each other goodbye. He may go his way, and I shall go mine. I shall do nothing for him, and I think he knows it. As to my money, it shall go to somebody who deserves it."

She looked Lilla straight in the face as she spoke. There certainly was something very strange and unusual in this outpouring from an utter stranger.

In theory there was nothing that Lilla disliked more; she hated effusive people, who talked of their own concerns, and thought they must interest everybody. But here was a contradiction.

This woman's talk really interested Lilla. She listened attentively to every word; odd little thrills seemed to run all through her as the story went on; her eyes deepened, and a faint color rose to her pale cheeks.

Lilla was at her prettiest now, and the stranger looking at her, almost forgot her own troubles in admiration.

"What do you think?" she said, after a minutes silence. "I am right, am I not?"

"I don't know," said Lilla, with much more hesitation than was usual with her. "You couldn't expect, could you, that your nephew would give up the girl, if they really cared for each other? Perhaps she is a much nicer girl than you think."

"Oh, no, no; I don't believe it. Of course he says she is lovely. He wanted to show me her photograph, but I wouldn't look at it. But don't you understand—even if she was an angel—he has no business to think of marrying at all. And he has engaged himself without even the politeness of consulting me. Well, as I tell him, he must depend upon himself now. You try to make excuses for him, which is very amiable of you, but I know you think him wrong. You would never forget all your duties and principles in that sort of way."

"Yes, indeed I should. I do," said Lilla quickly, with a sudden blush. "My brother thinks me just as bad—just as ungrateful, as you think your nephew."

"Then I am sure you are mistaken."

The stranger spoke as quickly and decidedly as Lilla herself, but with such a look and tone of sweetness, that Lilla suddenly moved from her own place, and sat down beside her.

Almost directly her new friend took her hand, and held it while they talked together. This sympathy, so strangely met, brought Lilla's troubles rushing to her lips and eyes.

She had no mother, no kind, foolish aunt, no one but a married elder sister, from whom she expected nothing but blame.

Percy thought she had been making a terrible fool of herself, and the world in general was sure to agree with him.

She told her fellow-traveller that she and Percy had been in the south of France, and had there met a young man sketching, who had meant to be an artist.

They had seen a great deal of him, and at last one day—Lilla did not enter much into her version of the old story, though no doubt, like other people, she thought it was quite different from everybody else's and far more interesting.

But her few words were quite as touching, quite as affective, as other peoples' sentimental histories. There was a kind of simple genius about Lilla, which her brother called "being stupidly different from other girls."

Lilla's lover had no money; he had no profession: but he was extremely, brilliantly clever, drew beautifully, and was sure to be a great artist some day.

He seemed to think that some relations might help him a little, just at first, and Lilla thought her brother Percy, who was unmarried and well off, might do the same for her.

But Percy took a very different view of the subject. He did not at all share his sister's faith in the artist's future; he wanted her to marry a friend of his own, a rich man, who admired her. Percy, in fact was not at all kind about it.

"Percy wants me to write to him, and tell him—but no, that I never will do," said Lilla sadly and strongly. "I see we shall have to wait for years. I told him I thought so. He didn't seem to think so—but anyhow, he knows it will make no difference to me."

"Is he good-looking?" asked her fellow-traveller.

"Oh—yes!" said Lilla. She might have been talking of the Apollo Belvedere.

"And he paints well, does he?"

"Yes, indeed—such lovely landscapes. And he has only begun quite recently."

"He has a spark of genius, no doubt; that makes all the difference," said the stranger. "Jack thinks he can draw, I believe. He told me one day he could make money by his sketches. Of course I laughed at him."

So they went on talking as their train hurried through France. Lilla could hardly believe, afterwards, that she had actually told all her history and poured out her whole heart to a person she had never met in her life before: but then this was such a wonderful person. She began to realize what she had done when they saw the sand hills and the sea, and then rushed on to Boulogne through the green briers and the fir trees.

"I ought not to have talked like this—but you have been so very kind, and I really am unhappy," she said.

Then the strange woman took her hand again.

"My dear, you must not be unhappy. Trust me, and dont be unhappy. I think I see a way out of your troubles—only don't give in, whatever you do."

In spite of her beating heart and her heavy eyelids, Lilla could hardly help laughing at her friends inconsistency.

"Give in! Oh no," she said. "But I'm afraid you are much more hopeful than I am."

"We shall see. In the meantime will you give me your address?"

"Yes, thank you so much. I do hope we shall meet again." Lilla hastily pulled a letter out of her pocket. Then she colored a little, and hesitated. Then she took the letter out of the envelope, and gave the envelope to her friend, saying half aloud, "I have no other."

Looking at the letter in her hand, and putting it back in a safe place, she missed the first expression on her friend's face, which was that of extreme astonishment, almost anger, quickly succeeded by intense amusement.

"'Miss Lilla Jones!'" she read out, in such an extremely odd voice that Lilla was startled.

"Is there anything wrong?" she said.

"No, my dear, nothing. Only your direction in the south of France is not of much use to me."

"Oh, I'm so sorry. Please give it me back. I can find a scrap of paper, I daresay."

"No, no; I like this. Write your English address on it—there's plenty of room."

"And—may I have yours?" asked Lilla, when she had obeyed.

"No; it doesn't matter about me. You shall hear from me. We shall know about each other in time. Here we are. Thank you for a miserable journey turned into a happy one."

"You have comforted me very much," said Lilla gratefully; but she was rather at a loss to understand her friend's meaning. The happiness of the journey, to all seeming, had only consisted in having the knowledge of another person's troubles added to her own.

* * * * * *

Jack, as his aunt, Mrs. Lindsay, always called him—this was only a pet name, the world in general knowing him as Reginald Carr—Jack was very much surprised at receiving a kind letter from his aunt, a few days after she had cast him off forever.

The beginning of the letter was kind, at least; the latter part seemed totally unreasonable.

Jack was staying on at the hotel in Paris, where he had come on purpose to meet his aunt, and to break the news of his engagement.

From former experience he had expected that his aunt, after storming a little, would kiss him and give her consent. He was then going to take her back to England, where his further plans would soon arrange themselves.

But her horrid obstinacy had knocked everything in the head. Jack did not know what to do with himself, and so for the present was finding a little amusement in Paris.

He was very painfully conscious that he could not marry on nothing. At the same time he could not possibly give up the girl with whom he was in love. He was furiously angry with his aunt.

In this letter she invited, or rather ordered him to come to London at once, naming a particular day and hour when she desired to see him.

She went on to say that she had met the person to whom she intended to leave all her money. "But there is still a loophole for you," she wrote; "you do not deserve anything at all, but come here at once, and we shall see whether we understand each other any better than we did."

"Hang the old woman and her money! What on earth does she mean?" said Jack, with other exclamations of the same kind. "She's mad. I wish she and her money had never been heard of. It's too bad, to bring a fellow to expect a thing, and then disappoint him after all. Who has she picked up now I wonder? One of the Lindsays? I'll be hanged if I go. I'd require to pack at once."

He did go, however, not being quite such a proud and rash young man as he supposed himself, however ungrateful his words and thoughts might be—but he went in a very bad temper.

He left his luggage, which was immense, at Charing Cross Station, and drove in a hansom to his aunt's house, not being sure whether she meant him to stay with her.

She said nothing about that, but received him kindly, and gave him luncheon, for he had arrived early in the day, according to the sudden and queer request.

There was something very odd about the old lady. Jack, who was inclined just then to take a dark view of all things, thought she was going out of her mind.

She looked at him in such a curious way, and said funny things which he really could not laugh at.

She moved about constantly and was in the highest spirits, while he sat slouching and looking down; his eyes were hollow, and his face was read after a windy crossing.

Did anybody ever think you good-looking, Jack?" asked Mrs. Lindsay.

"How should I know?" said the young man.

"Not a fair question, is it? I ought to ask somebody else. Well, you have told me nothing about your journey. Was it rough? Had you pleasant companions?"

"Yes, awfully rough. Don't know; didn't look at them; they were Frenchmen, mostly. By-the-by, how did you get on?"

"Ah, by-the-by! the first time I ever

travelled from Paris to London alone. Well, I stopped at Amiens, you know—a great mistake; and yet it wasn't. I believe it was one of the best things I ever did in my life."

"How was that?" said Jack, trying to seem interested.

"Well, from Amiens to Boulogne—on to London, in fact—I had the most charming fellow-traveller. She helped me, she took care of me, she did everything for me; she told me all her history, and we became friends of life. I found that there was only one thing she wanted to make her happy, and I determined she should have it."

"What?" said Jack suspiciously. He guessed what was coming now, and thought himself most abominably treated. Not even one of the Lindsays, not one of her husband's relations! but an accidental woman picked up in a railway car! Some sharp, designing creature, who had got round his aunt and made a fool of her. It was no surprise when Mrs. Lindsay answered his question—"Plenty of money."

Jack threw himself back in his chair. He tried to look as if it was nothing to him, but scowled hideously at the picture over the chimneypiece.

"It's a common complaint, and a difficult cure," he said. "Well, go on, Aunt Fanny. Is she French or English, young or old?"

"English, young, and very pretty," said his aunt. "At least, I am sure you would say so."

"I bet I shouldn't," replied Jack. "I haven't that desperate admiration for every girl I meet."

"I know that—but I know the sort of a thing you do admire. Now, Jack, suppose you and I have a bet on the subject. Ten pounds, if you like."

"No, thank you, I can't afford it," said Jack smiling grimly. "Besides, I'm not likely to see her, unless she has taken up her abode with you. And you can't expect me to like the notion of her—particularly."

"I am sorry for you, Jack," really, said Mrs. Lindsay. "But it is all your own fault. I have made up my mind, and can't change it now."

"No; so it seems," said Jack, getting up and shrugging his shoulders. "Why didn't you let me stay in Paris?"

"A very bad place for you. Besides, as I told you, there is a loophole. I will give you another chance."

"What's that?"

"You may marry her," said Mrs. Lindsay abruptly; and then she went to the other end of the room, and stood there fidgeting with some flowers, turning her back to her nephew.

Jack stood on the hearthrug with his hands in his pockets.

First he laughed, an unfluttering laugh to Mrs. Lindsay's new favorite; then he said—"Did you really send for me from Paris to tell me that, Aunt Fanny?"

For a moment she seemed to understand him in some way.

She turned round quickly with an exclamation on her lips—You don't——" but then she stopped herself as quickly, for poor old Jack looked both angry and dejected. "Well, you need not be scornful," she said. "My friend is very much too good for you. How do you know she would have you after all?"

"I don't see how you know it, either," he said. "But she won't be asked, so it does not matter."

"Look here, my dear Jack. You are ruining yourself; you are losing your last chance. The fact is simply this. If you marry any one but this friend of mine I won't leave you a penny. You may go your own way; you may go to the dogs if you like."

"Thank you; I will," said Jack. He then walked towards the door, but then turned round again and faced his aunt, looking extremely grave.

The conviction had come to him that she really must be going out of her mind. She had always been an odd woman, with a peculiar temper and a great many fancies; but she now seemed to be something really extraordinary.

Jack, who was a thoroughly honest fellow, with all his faults, was grieved and shocked at her unaccountable behavior. In former days she had always been kind, generous, and honorable. Now she seemed quite heartless.

There she stood, almost laughing, giving him the alternative between total ruin and the most blackguard, scoundrelly behavior. An evil spirit appeared in her.

"You can't mean it, Aunt Fanny!" he said. "I have told you who I am going to marry, and you can't possibly expect me to change my mind. If I have to work hard for her, very well, I can and I will. We shall not be dependent on you."

"Then we understand each other. You refuse my offer. Go and work then," said Mrs. Lindsay. "We need not be anxious about you."

"I don't understand your offer," said Jack, taking no notice of this unkind remark.

He was flushed and very angry; to himself the poor fellow seemed to be in the midst of a whirl of mocking faces.

His one wish now was to get away, and he turned to the door again. Just then came a visitor's knock.

"Here she is," said Mrs. Lindsay. "I asked her to come and see me this afternoon. "Well, Jack, then you have quite made up your mind; you won't marry her? Perhaps it was too much to expect. Don't rush out of that door; you will meet her. Go out this way, into the study; wait there for ten minutes, and then come back to me. I should like you to see her, though of course my plan won't do."

"I don't want to see her. I'll go off at once, thank you."

"Jack, do me the last favor. You need not stay in the room. You need only come in and say good-bye to me, if you like. You may be just as rude and sulky as you please—but I want you to see her. Go!"

Jack fled, for the visitor was just coming in. It was Miss Lilla Jones. She looked very pretty, and very well dressed. Mrs. Lindsay received her with eager kindness, and after thanking her many times for coming, began to talk seriously.

"I have been thinking a great deal about you," she said, "since we parted, and if you will let me, I am going to speak very plainly. First of all, my dear, it will never do for you to marry a poor man."

Lilla smiled, colored, and looked at her rather sadly.

"Your brother is perfectly right you know. It is a dreadful look out for you. Now listen to me. I told you in the train the other day how much I liked French marriages, and how wise I thought them. Do you remember? Well, now I have taken it into my head to arrange a marriage for you—one to which your brother can't possibly object. I want you to give up all your wild ideas, to be very good and sensible, and to make me and all your friends very happy—by marrying my nephew."

Lilla's face fell in a wonderful manner. She stared at Mrs. Lindsay in blank astonishment, and the only thing that crossed her mind was, "Poor dear thing she is crazy!" She began to wish herself safe out of the house, was in fact a little frightened, and did not in the least know what to say.

"But you know—I told you——" she stammered out. "I thought you understood——"

"I understood perfectly," said Mrs. Lindsay smiling. "But I have just been talking to my nephew. I told him that he must give up all his nonsensical ideas, and offer himself to you. My dear, if you will marry him I will leave him all my money, and allow him fifteen hundred a year now. If you won't, I intend to cut him off with a shilling, but I think in that case I shall leave everything to you. There's only one difficulty."

"More than one, I should think—but what is the one?" asked Lilla, as quietly as she could.

"He declares he will have nothing to do with you. He will not give up that girl he met in France. But I think when he sees you——"

"Please, Mrs. Lindsay, don't let us talk like this," said Lilla, getting up, with scarlet cheeks and eyes shining with surprise and anger. "You can't be serious in anything you are saying. You can't mean it—but your whole plan is perfectly impossible. How could I accept your money—a perfect stranger—and as to—I never heard such extraordinary things in my life."

"So Jack seemed to think," said Mrs. Lindsay coolly. "You take my proposal very much in the same way that he did, poor boy."

"Did you think that either of us could possibly consent to it?" asked Lilla, her blue eyes so dark and flashing that Mrs. Lindsay looked at her with admiration. "Besides, you astonish me. Don't you remember telling me not to give in? I have really hoped, all this time—you were so kind on the journey——" Lilla's voice failed a little; she bit her lips, and her eyes suddenly softened; it was too evident that she was going to cry. The pain, the disappointment, the almost insult from a person in whose kindness she has trusted, were too much for her, added to her former troubles.

Mrs. Lindsay watched her for a moment, and an odd convulsion passed over her face too. Then she got up, came across to the girl, took her face between her hands and kissed her, looking at her with such happy loving eyes that Lilla's tears were checked.

"I really am fiendish!" said Mrs. Lindsay, and she sprang across to the door, opened it, and called Jack.

He came slowly forward from the study.

"Come in, Jack," said his aunt. "Here is my friend. You need not at all be afraid of meeting her; she will have nothing whatever to say to you, and I have told her that you are exactly in the same state of mind towards her. But you both think you have to do with an old madwoman, so please indulge her last fancy by shaking hands.—Oh, no, Jack, no! You are forgetting yourself. This is disgraceful."

For Jack cried out, "Lilla!" and Lilla gave a little scream, and they did not meet at all as strangers, but as lovers long parted, while Mrs. Lindsay, whose remonstrances were useless, walked away smiling to the window.

On the Verge.

BY J. CHAMBERS.

ONCE upon a time—to commence in an orthodox fashion, a man and maid lived and loved. On the woman's part the affection was as pure and generous as ever filled the breast of a maiden; on the man's, as warm as his nature permitted.

His love did not absorb his whole soul, it rather permeated his mind and colored his being. Like most men of his not uncommon stamp, his affection once given, was given forever.

He was not of a jubilant nature, nor did his feelings lie near the surface, and his manner was undemonstrative.

The girl was clear-sighted enough to see what love there was, and pure and true, she made for its scarcity with the overflowings of her sympathetic nature. She idealised rather than condoned.

She gave in such measure that she could not perceive how little she was receiving in return; or if she noticed it, her consciousness of its worth seemed to her a full equivalent.

He was an artist; and circumstances forced the lovers to wait, and at the same time kept them apart. A couple of days once a month, and a week now and again, was the limit of the time they could spend together.

This, of course, prevented them getting that intimate knowledge of each other's personality which both recognized as an essential of the adjunct to the happiness of married life, though they did their best to obviate it by long letters, giving full details of daily events and of the society in which they moved.

The remedy was an imperfect one. Strive as they might, the sketches were crude, and the letters had a tendency to become stereotyped.

We only mention these details to show that they tried to be perfectly honest with each other.

While the girl's life, in her quiet country home, was one that held little variety in it, it was a part of the man's stock-in-trade to mix with society and to observe closely.

Whether he liked or not, he was compelled to make friends to such an extent as to offer him an opportunity of gauging character. Unfortunately for the purpose of my study, he had no sympathy with pessimism or pessimists.

He loved the good and the beautiful for their own sakes, and in his art loved to dwell on the bright side of human nature.

At one of the houses at which he was a welcome guest, the lover found a young girl bright, sensuous, beautiful.

Unwitting, he compared her with the one whose heart he held, and the comparison was unsatisfactory to him; do what he would, the honesty of his nature compelled him to allow that this beautiful girl was her superior in a number of ways to whom he had pledged his life.

He was caught in the Circe's chains of golden hair, and fancied—almost hoped—yet feared lest, like bonds of cobwebs in the fairy tale, the toils were too strong for him to break.

He could see, too, that the girl regarded him with a feeling so warm, that a chance spark would rouse it into a flame of love; and this gave her an interest as dangerous as it was fascinating.

His fancy swerved. Day after day he strove with himself, and by efforts, too violent to be wise, he kept away from the siren till his inflamed fancy forced him back to her side.

To the maiden in the country he was partially honest. In his letters he faithfully told her of his visits, and as far as he could, recorded his opinions of the girl who had captivated his fancy.

Too keen an artist to be blind to her faults, he dwelt on them in his frequent letters at unnecessary length.

When the lovers met, the girl questioned him closely about her rival, but only from the interest she felt in all his friends known and unknown, for her love for him was too pure and strong to admit of jealousy, and he, with what honesty he could, answered her questions unreservedly.

Little by little he began to examine himself. Which girl did he really love? Should he not be doing a wrong to both by not deciding? The examination was dangerous, because it was not thorough.

The premises were true, but incomplete.

Yet we would wrong him if we implied that he for a moment thought seriously about breaking off his engagement.

Even had he wished, his almost mistaken feelings of honor would have forbidden it. This constant surface introspection—a kind of examination which, had not the subject been himself, he would have despised and avoided—could have but one result—an obliquity of mental vision.

He had a horror of being untrue—untrue to himself as untrue to his love, and yet he dreaded causing pain to a bosom so tender and innocent.

When he sat down to write the periodical letters to the girl to whom he was engaged, he found his phrases becoming more and more general and guarded.

He took pains not to let her know what he felt must wound her, and the letters grew as unnatural as they had been the reverse; were descriptive of the man rather than the reflex of his personality.

The country girl was quick of perception. The letters were more full of endearing terms than ever; they were longer and told more of his life; yet between the lines she could see that they were by one whose heart was not at rest, and that a sense of duty and not of pleasure prompted the ample details.

Their very regularity was painful; it seemed as if the writer was anxious to act up to the letter of his understanding.

She knew the letters were often written when he was tired out. Why did he put off writing, and taking advantage of her love, let her exercise her trust in him?

Eagerly she scanned the pages to find the name of her rival, and having found it, would thoughtfully weigh every word of description, of blame or praise.

When the lovers met, she questioned him closer than she had ever done before. He was seemingly as fond as ever; no endearing name, no accustomed caress, was forgotten.

He spoke of himself and his friends as freely as usual, and all her questions were answered without a shadow of reserve. Yet the answers were slower, and his manner absent and thoughtful. For a time she put it down to the absorbing nature of his pursuits; but little by little, a belief that she was no longer dearest crept into her heart, and would not be dislodged, try as she might.

She thought she was jealous, and struggled night and day against a fault she dreaded above all others; then, in a paroxysm of despair, she allowed herself to be convinced of what she feared, and, loving him deeply, prepared to make the greatest sacrifice an unselfish woman can offer. He no longer loved her; it was best he should be free.

When he had been with her last, he had told her that his ensuing absence must perforce be longer than usual, and this she thought would be the best time for her purpose.

"Dear Frank," she wrote at the end of a pitiful little letter, "I am going to ask you not to come here next week. This will surprise you, for in my other letters I have told you that what I most look forward to in life is your visits. But I have been thinking, dear, that it will be best for us to part forever. I often ask myself if we love one another as much as we did, and I am afraid we do not. A loveless married life would be too dreadful to live through, and I dare not risk it. It is better that the parting should come through me. Do not fancy that I am reproaching you; I cannot, for to me you are above reproach, above blame. All I feel is that our affection is colder, so we had better part. God bless you, Frank; I can never tell you how deeply I have loved you.—Elsie."

Frank was almost stunned by the receipt of this letter. He read it and re-read it till every word seemed burnt into his brain. That the girl's love for him was less he did not believe; he could read undiminished affection in the vague phraseology, in the studied carefulness to take equal blame on herself.

That she should be jealous was out of the question; long years of experience had taught him that this was totally foreign to her trustful nature.

There was but one conclusion to come to. She had given him up because she thought his happiness involved. Yet she wished him to be free; might it not be ungracious to refuse to accept her gift?

Free! There was a terrible fascination in the sound. Be the bondage ever so pleasant, be it even preferable to liberty itself, the idea of freedom is irresistibly alluring. If the same bondage will be chosen again, there is a delight in the consciousness that it will be your own untrammelled choice. Frank was aware of a wild exultation when he realised the fact that he was once more a free agent.

In the first flush of liberty, poor Elsie's image faded out of sight, and that of the siren took its place.

Now, without wrong, he might follow his inclinations. He determined to write to Elsie, but knew not what to say, and put it off till the morrow.

There could be no harm in going to the house of his fascinator; it was pleasant to think that he might now speak, think, look, without any mental reservations; there would be no longer any need to watch his actions, or to force back the words which would tell her that she exercised a deadly power over him.

The girl received him with a grinning smile, yet, when he touched her hand, he did not feel his brain throb or his blood rush madly through his veins as he had expected.

He bore his part through the evening quietly, and owned that it was a pleasant one; still the flavor was not what he had expected.

He called to mind that when he was abroad for the first time, he had been served with a peculiar dish, which he remembered, and often longed for when unattainable.

After several years, he had visited the same cafe and ordered the same dish.

The same cook prepared it, and the same waiter served it, but the taste was not the same; expectation had heightened the flavor, and the real was inferior to the ideal.

So it was with Frank. Before, when the siren had seemed unattainable, he had luxuriated in her beauty, admired her grace and beauty, and revelled in her wit; now, when he felt he might call these his own, his eye began to detect deficiencies. The girl noted his critical attitude, and chafed at the calmness of his keen watchful glance.

Where was the open admiration she used to read in his eyes? Piqued at his indifference, she grew silent and irritable; and when he bade her farewell, both were conscious that an ideal had been shattered.

He buttoned his overcoat, and prepared for a long walk to the lonely chambers where he lived the usual careless, comfortless life of a bachelor whose purse is limited.

All the way home he submitted himself to a deep and critical examination. He felt as if he was sitting by the ashes of a failing fire which he had no means of replenishing; the night was coming, and he must sit in the cold.

If passion died out, where was he to look for the sympathy, the respect, the true friendliness which alone can supply its place in married life?

Then he thought of Elsie. He had made a mistake, but a very common mistake. He had thought that the excitement of his interest, the enchaining of his fancy, and the enthralment of his senses was love, and lo! it was only passion.

He analysed his feelings more deeply yet, and getting below the surface currents which are stirred by the winds, saw that the quiet waters beneath had kept unswervingly on their course.

When he reached his chambers, he sat down by his table and drew paper and ink towards him.

"I shall not accept your dismissal, Elsie,"

he wrote hurriedly in answer to her piteous letter. "I should be very shallow if I could not read the motive which prompted your letter. I shall come down as usual, and we will talk over it until we understand each other fully. Till then, you must believe me when I tell you that I love you all the more for your act of sacrifice, and that I love you more now than I have ever done before."

Frank and Elsie have been long married, and are content. There is no fear of his swerving again; but the event described left its mark on Frank.

He knows now that he was on the verge of committing a grievous mistake, and one which might have darkened all his future life.

It is not great events, involving tragedies and tears, that impress themselves most deeply upon the body of our habits and thoughts; but the tendency of our life, as in the case before us, is often most deeply affected by what is no more than an "every day occurrence."

Nipped in the Bud.

BY A. D. H.

I WONDER how it happens that I was always so ready to fall in love? For one thing my parents made a runaway match of it, after only once meeting, and that at a ball.

Then again my father died soon after my appearance, and my mother consoled herself with the circulating library.

The blessedness of love was thus early impressed on me—indeed, I believe my first religious instruction consisted in learning by heart Solomon's praise of women.

My earlier efforts at falling in love hardly met with the success I had been led to expect from the story books; in fact I was hardly ever able to speak to the charmer.

None of those happy occasions for rescuing her from unforeseen peril, or even for picking up her handkerchief happened, leading me to doubt that special providence, so largely drawn on by my chosen romancers.

But I hoped against hope.

My twenty-first birthday put me in possession of a comfortable independence, of which I took advantage, by leaving home and living in lodgings.

A latch-key (hitherto a never-to-be-mentioned luxury) had its charms, and also my mother had latterly turned from sentiment to religion.

Of parsons I never was an admirer, notwithstanding their intimate connection with the marriage service. And one of them, together with my mother, had recently decided to play the passive part in that fine service.

One fine Saturday morning I was strolling up and down Paddington Station, having resolved to spend the week-end snaring the wily roach from a punt, on which boat, in my opinion, builders have never improved.

In what other craft, I ask, can you have a comfortable chair? I had a few minutes to wait, and was wandering aimlessly about, when I turned and came face to face with the most beautiful creature I ever saw, that is, till I met the present Mrs. Smith.

She was tall and fair, quite divinely so, as some one remarks. She had on a close-fitting dress of dark-blue serge, and——but I will spare the reader any further rhapsodies.

With her was an old gentleman, her father obviously. One quiet glance of her eyes finished me completely; if grovelling on the ground could have won her, I would have grovelled; perhaps I could display my valor and knock somebody down—a porter, or the old gentleman.

On second thoughts, it seemed injudicious to do either. The old gentleman was her father, and the porter—well, he was as big as I was.

Something, however, must be done. Mentally I passed in review all the methods of becoming acquainted with the heroine adopted by the heroes of my pet novels, but in all these cases Venus seemed to have acted as beneficent providence, while for me there was no such a fairy godmother. No raving maniac dashed on the station, the old gentleman had lost neither his purse nor his tickets; I didn't get a chance to chime in anyhow.

At last they took their seats in the train I was going by. Happy thought, I would see where they got out, and track them home. "John," I said to myself, "you are a man of sound common sense, the idea is worthy of you."

As I was mentally congratulating myself, their compartment filled up, and I had to contempt myself with the next. However, I secured a corner on the upside, and so insured my seeing them as they left the train.

As we steamed out of the station I leant back and gave myself up to meditation. The cars on the G.W.R. are very comfortable, the sunshine was delightful, and my cigar was super-excellent.

Brighter and brighter grew the castles in the air, the wedding-day was fast approaching, when I was rudely awakened. "Tickets, please."

There was a conductor standing over me, and fumbling hastily for my ticket, I asked him where we had got to. "Reading," was his answer, so I paid the excess on my ticket and dashed out of the car. My worst fears were realised: they had left the train, but where? The guard could give me no information.

There was nothing for it but to curse my stars and get back as fast as I could. This, found could not be for an hour, so I wandered into Reading, fuming.

This place had no attractions for me, even the thought of biscuits was without charm. On my way back to the station I was startled by a huge slap on the back.

It was the last straw, my temper could hold out no longer. I turned round, prepared to curse bitterly, and found my assailant to be none other than my dear old friend Brown.

After the first greetings, I seriously warned him against the evil practice of saluting a friend by a slap on the back. It is practically staking your reception on the chance of your friends being in a good temper.

Brown and I, while at school, had been the closest of chums, and when he went on to College, we had always continued our friendship at the vacations.

He was always somewhat of a quiet and reserved youth, and for this reason, perhaps, had been the confident in all my sentimentalisms in days gone by.

Latterly our correspondence had flagged; excepting his ordination, I knew nothing of him since he had left College, now four years ago. It turned out he was going by the same train as myself.

So as soon as we were off, we at once entered into details of what had happened since our last meeting. He, it appeared, was just married, and had a good living near Soone, which had come to him through the influence of his father-in-law.

"You used to beat me hollow," he said, "at falling in love, hence I am much surprised that I am the first to turn married man.

"You must come down and see my wife, and the new parsonage. I had great trouble with the dinner-an board," he was going on, but seeing the blackness stealing over my face, he refrained. "And you," he continued, "what is your latest adventure in the toiling a-love-line?"

In the fulness of my heart I there and then told him all that weary afternoon's exploits, with many raptures of her divine beauty.

He laughed consumedly, far more I thought than the humor of the story merited. Finally he apologized, and, still gasping, explained that he knew the young lady perfectly well from my description—in fact, would be glad to introduce me any time.

The train stopped at Soone, where Brown was to get out, but before he did so, I had overwhelmed him with thanks, and accepted an invitation to come and dine on Tuesday, there to meet my charmer.

"No thanks, no thinks," his last words were, "thank me when it is all over."

I fear I did some mad things in that empty compartment, and what old Joe, my fisherman, thought of me the next day, I can only dimly conjecture. Coming down from one of my loftiest air castles, I happened to remark that I didn't seem to be catching much.

"No," he replied, "we arn't a catching much. You see you's a-fishing for roach, but if any gentleman was to ask me, why, I should say as how you was fishing for perch. Lor bless me, there he goes again."

Though aware of this (from Joe) withering sarcasm, I am afraid I did not improve much, my day-dreams were far too sweet. Fishing is the best method of doing nothing, and enjoying it, I am acquainted with; that is, real fishing, from a punt or from the bank in a quiet place; none of your break-neck scrambling after salmon or trout. But let me hasten to the end. In this way I managed to pass the Sunday and Monday. On Tuesday I hastened to town, selected my most approved suit, and made a most careful toilet. At six that evening I was ringing the bell of the parsonage at Soone.

I was shown into a room, the servant telling me that Mr. Brown would be down in a few moments. As I entered, she muttered something, lost to me, for there was the beauty standing by the fire. As I advanced, I heard Brown's step behind me.

"Here you are, old man," he exclaimed; "let me introduce you—Mr. Smith—my wife."

SOME CAT STORIES.

THE following feline gossip we have gathered from various sources, and now lay before our readers for their amusement.

While cats have been known, like the famished mothers in Jerusalem, to devour their own offspring, they have also been known, when deprived of their kittens, to adopt young hares, hedgehogs, rats, and even chickens. The unusual sight of a rat and five young ones in the same nest with a cat and three kittens has been seen in Edinburgh.

Tortoise-shell cats especially are clever at opening doors; others, deplorable poachers on week-days, become the very pink of propriety as soon as Sabbath-day comes round. Besides being capital hunters and mice-catchers, others can fish, ring door-bells, steal cream, and break eggs in a most systematic manner.

The cat that gravely laid a portion of its dinner in front of a mouse-hole, and then retired to await the result, had surely something in common with the human speculator and quack, who does pretty nearly the same thing through a newspaper advertisement.

While black cats are supposed by the superstitious to have some connection with the Evil One, others make capital ghosts. A farm house in the north of England was haunted by an invisible ghost, which for a considerable time had been in the habit of ringing a certain bell, and the most lamentable results were about to follow, when the farmer with the family Bible, and a student with a bottle of whiskey, sat up all night, and effectually laid the ghost.

It was discovered very much to their satisfaction, that the bell had been rung by Puss in her efforts to seize the handle, which consisted of a hare's foot. Many people have heard of the ploughman's wise and affectionate cat Mysie.

The ingenuity shown by cats in opening doors is sometimes remarkable. A large cat in the country was in the habit of opening the door for himself in the following manner. The handle in the door was one of the old-fashioned hooped kind, which required to be grasped, and the latch pressed with the thumb. "He leaped on the window-sill which was near the door, sprang from there, and caught the hoop with his fore-paw, and hung on until he pressed down the latch with the other—this operation required considerable force—when the door, swinging open, Puss dropped to the floor, and quietly walked in." In a like ingenious manner a cat has been known to open a kitchen dresser door by working the bar which acted as a fastener round from a horizontal to a perpendicular position, and thus gaining ingress.

A contributor says, "We had a horse which was kept in a stable not far from the house, and into the stall my man introduced a kitten, and a very close intimacy soon grew up between the kitten and the horse. I have often seen her on his back, which her equine friend quite seemed to understand, and she made her bed just under his manger, and we have frequently seen them having bits of fun together.

"The horse would advance his head towards her, when Puss would put up both her paws, and pretend to scratch his nose, which he seemed rather to enjoy; and then he would seize grimalkin by the skin of her neck in his teeth, and lift her up, and quietly drop her, only to repeat the game, which both seemed to enjoy.

"After a while we sold the horse, whereupon the cat seemed quite disconsolate. Previously the stable had been her home, where she always stayed, except for an occasional run in the garden. But now she could not be induced to stay there, and for weeks she lamented the loss of her friend by fretting and mewing about the house."

The affection of a certain cat for a pug-dog was great.

"The cat," says its owner, "was constantly observed to bring live mice to the pug, and we all were amused at the cat pushing the mouse before the pug, who was much more alarmed than pleased.

"Our pug became very fat, and we gave strict orders to our servants not to feed him. Still as pug continued fat, we watched him, and we found that he ate the scraps that were left for the pigs. This place was, accordingly, boarded over, so that pug could not get over the barricade. Nevertheless, to our astonishment, pug continued as fat as ever; when we discovered that the cat used to climb over the boards and bring over with her bones of chicken and fish for pug, who was waiting expectantly on the other side."

A lady in Norfolk tells a story of a cat that always came to family worship. She knew the bell, and would race from the garden or yard, to reach the door ere it was closed, then take her place demurely on the hearth-rug, and sit erect, with tail curled gracefully round her paws. When her kitten was old enough to enjoy the privilege, the mother made her come too, and sit by her side in precisely the same position, gravely reproving any inclination to play.

DYING FOR ANOTHER.—In China capital punishment is the legal penalty for murder, piracy, and persistent thieving. It may also be inflicted, at the discretion of the magistrate, in aggravated cases of any description. Infanticide, however, is not regarded as murder, the parent, by Chinese law, having the right to take away the life of the child. Hence the practice of killing female infants. The law which sentences a person to death may always be satisfied by a proxy, if the condemned can afford to buy one. Thus, when a rich man is found guilty of capital crime, he offers $100 or $200 for a substitute, and some impecunious, but numerous, family agrees to furnish one for the place. Lots are then cast to determine who shall be the victim, the unlucky member accepting his fate with stoical indifference. At the time appointed he presents himself at the court, and the convicted individual dies by proxy, while the bereaved relatives of the deceased enjoy the proceeds of the economical arrangement.

ON THE EYES.—A few hints how to preserve the eyes:—Keep a shade on your lamp or gas-burner. Avoid all sudden changes between light or darkness. Never begin to read, write, or sew for several minutes after coming from darkness to a bright light. Never read by twilight, moonlight, or on cloudy days. Never read or sew directly in front of the light, window or door. It is best to let the light fall from above, obliquely, over the left shoulder. Never sleep so that, on first awakening, the eyes shall open on the light of a window. Do not use the eyesight by light so scant that it requires an effort to discriminate. The moment you are instinctively prompted to rub your eyes, that moment stop using them. If the eyelids are glued together on waking up, do not forcibly open them, but apply saliva with the finger—it is the speediest ointment in the world, then wash your eyes and face in warm water.

POLICEMAN.—"You come right along with me." Inebriate—"Take some other fellow. Don't take me. I'm an unlucky cuss. Every time I promenade with a policeman I get locked up."

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Signor Succi, aged forty-five, originally a bank clerk at Rome, and afterwards a traveller in the East and in Africa, claims to have discovered an elixir, a small quantity of which enables a man to fast for thirty days, or even two months. The former period he has lately accomplished successfully at Milan, under the inspection of a committee of physicians. Besides sixty grammes of his liquor at the beginning, he swallowed nothing but pure water, a portion of which he heated to 104 degrees Fahrenheit, and small quantities of Vichy and Hunyady Janos water. The time of the fast is less than Dr. Tanner's, but Signor Succi after the first few days, which he spent in bed, seemed to preserve nearly his full strength, spending sometime daily in swimming and fencing.

The Chinese farm-house is a curious looking abode. Usually it is sheltered with groves of feathery bamboo and thick-spreading banyans. The walls are of clay or wood, and the interior of the house consists of one main room, extending from the floor to the tiled roof, with closet-looking apartments in the corners for sleeping rooms. There is a sliding window in the roof, made of cut oyster shells arranged in rows, while the side windows are mere wooden shutters. The floor is the bare earth, where at nightfall there often gathers together a miscellaneous family of dirty children, fowls, ducks, pigeons and a litter of pigs, all living together in delightful harmony. In some districts infested by marauding bands, houses are strongly fortified by high walls, containing apertures for firearms, and protected by a moat crossed by a rude drawbridge.

An East Indian newspaper gives an account of a recent occurrence in Rajpootana which shows the hold that ancient superstitions still have among the natives. Some years ago the Native States of Oodeypore and Tonk, with a view of simplifying their boundaries, exchanged certain villages near Neemuch. In this process a village inhabited entirely by Brahmins passed from Oodeypore to the Nawab of Tonk. This village had been granted in perpetuity to the Brahmins by a former Maharana of Oodeypore, subject only to the nominal annual fee of twelve rupees for protection. After the exchange the Tonk authorities imposed a revenue assessment, which was raised from time to time to at present 500 rupees annually. Successive deputations of the villagers proceeded to Tonk to lay the case before the Durbar, but without effect. Thereupon the Brahmins assembled and decided by the voices of all present, women as well as men, that nothing was left to move the Durbar except the human sacrifice known as "Johur." Four women presented themselves as victims, but at the last moment two became frightened and withdrew. No opposition being offered, the other two went bravely and willingly to meet death, and were burned alive in the presence of the assembled community; their charred hands being afterwards carried by the villagers to Oodeypore with a demand for redress. This occurred a few weeks ago, and at midday, no attempt at concealment being made.

There is consternation just now among the jewellers of Paris, who have found themselves the dupes of what has not yet been pronounced to be a fraud. Last year they were the victims of a diamond fraud. The gems found at the Cape were more plentiful and of inferior quality to the genuine diamond of fifty years ago. The fire was less brilliant, and the stones had a yellow tinge. An ingenious manipulator steeped them in a violet dye, and by some chemical process they came forth from the ordeal a brilliant white. This industrious investigator received as the reward of his research a recompense of six months' imprisonment, and the jewellers were for the moment comforted. But now things are going wrong again. There are some splendid rubies in the market, whose genesis it is very difficult to account for. Tested chemically, they answer the true definition of the Oriental ruby; analysis shows them to consist of all its constituents—and nothing else. The chemist is satisfied, but the expert has his doubts. The fire is not so brilliant, and there are certain yellow tones which the true gem has escaped. It is suspected that a difficult problem has been solved, especially since it is found that these gems when broken up do not follow a regular line of cleavage—as a crystal should—but split in all directions. It is suspected that Swiss artificers have learned how to melt a number of small rubies and consolidate them into one. Ten carats weight of ruby sparks would be worth a few dollars; one ruby of ten carats would be worth some hundreds of dollars. The subject is a serious one, and there are both chemical and legal difficulties in its treatment. Experts are now employed to ascertain how the thing is done, and then the judges will decide whether the process or sale amounts to fraud.

The inhabitants of the Andaman Islands in the Pacific Ocean, are the smallest race of people in the world. The average height of full-grown Andamans is 4ft. 3in., and few weigh over 76 lbs. They are marvellously swift of foot, and as they smear themselves over with a mixture of oil and red ochre, present a very strange appearance. Few travellers care to encounter any of these bellicose little people, for their skill in throwing the spear and using the bow is only equalled by their readiness to attack strangers.

Our Young Folks.

KATIE'S TEA PARTY.

BY SARAH PITT.

"KATIE," said Mrs. Brand, who was standing at the garden gate and opened it as she spoke to let her little girl in, "were those the children at the new corner house you were talking to?"

"Yes, it was Bella and Julia Miller, mamma," answered Katie complacently; they gave such grand parties often, and they were telling me about them, and Julia says they are going to ask me to the next."

"But, Katie, they are people I do not wish you to make any acquaintance with; I have seen them quarrelling with each other very rudely indeed, and am quite sure they would not do my girlie any good."

"But, mamma, they're quite rich," argued Katie, "lots more money than we have, and it's such a grand house too, isn't it. There's a looking glass right up to the ceiling."

"Nevertheless, that does not make them desirable friends for you. I should be sorry to see my Katie spoiled even for the sake of a looking-glass up to the ceiling."

Mrs. Brand was called away in doors at this point, and Katie sauntered on around the garden by herself rather blankly.

She had been greatly impressed by the dashing manners of these new arrivals, and had already compromised herself to the extent of hinting at a possible party in return for their coming favors, and now, if mamma did not relent, Katie felt she would be placed in a most undignified position, and didn't quite see her way out of it.

"Still, people never expect to be asked to tea straight off," she said to herself, staring thoughtfully at a bed of pretty pink daisies.

But Katie's ideas of lawful expectation and her new acquaintances' ideas on the same subject differed considerably.

She met them every day either on the way to or from school, and before the end of the first week they were demanding when she meant to carry out her invitation.

"Our mamma lets us give as many parties as we like," remarked Bella Miller lofty. "We had one in the garden last month, more than twenty guests, we asked them on gilt paper, too."

"And we had a tea-party in the garden once," returned Katie brightening up—"at least in a little wood at the end of the garden; there's a gate into it, and it was lovely on the grass under the beautiful trees."

"Perhaps she isn't allowed," volunteered Bella with an unpleasant laugh.

Katie marched home with hot cheeks—her mother's wisdom, her own sense of right and wrong, generally clear enough, swallowed up in a feeling of injured pride. She would give a tea-party, out on the grass too.

That would show them she wasn't altogether a baby, and after—well, after, she did not much care just then whether they noticed her again or not.

The downward path is fatally smooth sometimes. That afternoon Mrs. Brand was sent for to stay three days with a friend dangerously ill. Katie watched her go very silently.

As soon as the cab had disappeared, Katie abstracted a sheet of note-paper out of the desk, and betook herself down the garden to the wood.

Gilt-edged paper was beyond her, but the invitation must be written out in proper style.

She sat down on the grass under a big beech tree while she composed it.

"Miss Kate Brand begs to invite Miss Julia Miller and Miss Bella Miller to a wood tea-party, the day after to-morrow at six o'clock."

She delivered the note into Julia Miller's own hand as she hurried past the house on her way to school the next morning. That off her mind, next came the practical part, how the tea was to be provided and carried to the wood.

Katie meant to do the thing properly now that she had begun it, and nothing less than the best china would content her. Three of the old dragon red and blue cups and saucers, a sugar basin and milk jug, were surreptitiously conveyed to a hollow in the beech, and then she went into the kitchen to make terms with Bridget for some help.

"Bridget, I've asked two of the girls to have tea with me to-morrow in the wood; will you please make me a tea-pot full? I'll carry it there."

"And why can't you take it in the house along with the others, Miss Kate?"

"It's nicer out there, Bridget; do, there's a good girl, and I'll dust my room every day this week."

Bridget was always ready to oblige if it cost nothing, and agreed without further parley, and also to provide bread-and-butter and biscuits.

"The day after to-morrow at six o'clock" came on due course. Katie met her guests at the garden gate, and escorted them to the beech. The cloth was spread under the old beech—the bread-and-butter and biscuits set to the best advantage. Bridget had also brought out the strawberries, and Katie herself was quite pleased with the effect. Unconsciously it did not impress her visitors in that way at all.

"Is there nobody coming but us?" demanded Julia; "I thought you said a 'party.'"

"I never thought of asking anyone else," owned Katie, apologetically.

"My! what a party!" laughed Bella; "why, we have had many a time, and we always had lots and lots."

"You will find that more a great deal better. I think it's more than any chairs," said Katie, beginning to pour out the tea.

"Is that the company teapot?" was Bella's next question.

Her hostess flushed scarlet; the "company" teapot was securely locked up—this was Bridget's, and belonged to the kitchen, but what been the only one came-at-able, Katie did not want to have to explain this.

"Don't there any cups?"—this after an awful silence, in a dissatisfied tone from Julia—"we get cake every day at home. I don't call this much of a party."

For one minute Katie hesitated between indignation and politeness, scarcely able to keep back her tears. Then she rose with burning cheeks but great dignity. "My mamma always taught me that it was very rude to make remarks and comparisons of that kind, she did not wish me to have any thing to do with you, and I am very sorry indeed I disobeyed her."

The visitors sprang to their feet. "We'd better go home again, Julia, and get our tea there," said Bella, angrily; "we'd never have troubled to come at all, if we'd known you couldn't afford anything better than this stuff," pointing her foot scornfully at the remains of the feast. Whether she was standing nearer than she was aware, or whether it was intentional, Katie could not be sure, but at that moment one of the precious cups and saucers crashed to pieces under her foot.

* * * * * * * *

Long after her unmannerly guests had noisily vanished, Katie sat there crying tears over the remains of her unhappy party. For the first time she longed for her mother, and this was all the satisfaction she was to have out of it. "And, oh," she sobbed, "I didn't need to have her pretty cups broken to make it worse! How am I to tell her about it?"

"Tell her what?" came her mother's gentle voice from behind. "What is my girlie getting here by herself for?" Then as she came in sight of the tea-things, "what does this mean?" she asked gravely.

In a very deluge of repentant tears, the culprit told her story. "I thought they were such clever girls, and it would be so nice to have them all to myself, and they were just horrid, but even if they had been as good as I expected, it wasn't worth it, and I've spoilt your pretty tea-things."

"It's not the tea things I am sorry about," said Mrs. Brand; "it is that my little daughter that I have always trusted so, could deceive me so."

"She never will again, mother," cried Katie, very earnestly, as they walked up the wood together, half an hour later—"at least I'll try hard not. Will you let me keep the broken pieces, and then if I shall ever feel like forgetting, I'll look at them, and remember just how I felt to-night about it?"

"Very well, you shall, and if they help you to keep your promise it will not be the most useful cup in the set, broken though it be."

And safe under the dollies and bits of bright ribbon and lace that make up Katie's treasures, in her own particular drawer, she keeps that little cup and saucer in a little paper packet; but she has not needed to open it once, so far, to remind her of her melancholy tea-party and its consequences.

ABOUT TOM TUCKER.

BY HENRY FRITH.

MASTER THOMAS TUCKER, who had, as you may have read, offended a Court lady by singing to her in the shop instead of speaking, was put in prison by the king. Poor Tom was very lonely in his cell, which had bars on the window-frame, and no glass. Fortunately, it was fine weather, and not cold.

The king who had put Tom in prison was a very busy man, and I am sorry to say that the queen was a very idle lady.

She made tarts and jam, and jam tarts; and she was also extremely fond of honey. There were bees in the gardens as well as flies in the stables: there were dogs and hounds in the kennels: hawks and cats in the mews. The king was very careful about his money, and the family did its washing at home.

Tom Tucker knew this, because he used to look out of windows and watch the maid hanging out the Court suits to dry.

That was the only amusement Tom had, except when he tried to tame some blackbirds which came flying about the prison gardens.

Tom used to put the crumbs which he saved from his rye-bread into his pocket, and feed the birds, and this amusement led to his being released from prison, as you shall hear.

The blackbirds and thrushes liked Tom very much. They would perch on the bars of the window and sing, and Tom would take them in his hands sometimes, or put them under his hat, where they would go to sleep with their heads under their wings.

Many weeks passed, and the king's birthday was near. Tom heard from his keepers of the great preparations that were being made for the banquet, the great birthday dinner, at which a number of new dishes were to be served, and a great birthday-cake, with the crown and the hearts, like playing-cards; a prize was offered for the most curious dish, and the most wonderful things were thought of.

Tom, in prison, was told of the preparations.

"There is a boa-constrictor in jelly," said the gaoler, "and a monkey pudding, and a stewed elephant; there are bears' tails and buffaloes' humps, with flying fish and swimming fowls—all kinds of beautiful dishes."

"Oh!" said Tom; "I wish I could make a pie or a pudding. Perhaps the king would let me go free!"

"I [illegible] would," said the man, "if you sing [illegible] as well..."

"I try," replied Tom Tucker. "There is a week yet. Bring me the news every day, that I may think of something more wonderful than anybody else."

Next day and the day after the gaoler came and told him about the crystallised oysters, the canvas-back ducks, and the green geese that had been sent in barley-sugar houses with gelatine windows, of the apples filled with melted gold, and the strawberries studded with diamonds, the cherries in which were precious stones, and gooseberries filled with seed pearls.

Tom was in despair. How could he ever hope to send in such dainty dishes as these, and be set free upon the king's birthday?

He thought and thought until the very morning before the birthday, and at last an idea came into his head. He was singing to himself—

"Sing a song of sixpence,
A pocket full of rye."

The rye was the rye-bread which he had crumbled in his pockets for the birds.

"Oh," said Tom aloud, "I wish I could make something in the shape of a pie."

Just then three blackbirds came up and sang for their usual meal. Tom fed them, and then hid them under his hat. While others came in, and he fed them he put them under his hat until quite a number were collected, and when Tom lifted up the straw hat a little, they all chirped and sang to be let out.

Tom burst out laughing. "Well," he said, "you are are a funny pack of birds. I never saw such in my life. If the king only heard or saw you I am sure he would laugh, and then he might let me go out of prison."

Then suddenly an idea struck Tom. He kept some big birds under his big hat, and some under a cloth, where they went to sleep.

Then he shouted until the keeper came and asked him what he wanted.

"I want a big pie-dish," cried Tom, "and some rolled dough for crust. Let me make the king a pie."

"Certainly," replied the man. "I cannot prevent any one from sending the king a present. But what will your pie contain? Yourself?"

"No," said Tom, "I never thought of that. I have a better plan. Get me the dish and the paste, and I will make a glorious dish, fit to set before the king!"

That night he fed his birds, and while they were asleep he packed them—twenty-four fine blackbirds—into an empty pie-dish.

He covered the dish with paste, but all around the edge he left little holes, into which he put the birds' beaks so that they could breathe while packed in the pie.

The paste was in the morning browned near the fire, and so arranged by the gaoler's wife that the pie looked quite cooked and baked beautifully.

Then Tom, in his Court calico suit, and attended by the gaoler, went to the beautiful palace.

As he got near the royal apartments the gaoler, who liked Tom, told him that he might sing or whistle a song.

So Tom, who had made up his mind, began the rhyme which all children know nowadays, but which was first sung by Tom Tucker:

"Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye,
Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie;
When the pie is opened the birds begin to sing:
Is not that a dainty dish to set before a king?"

Tom was a good singer, and his voice soon reached the king, who was in his counting-house reckoning up his sovereigns.

The queen was finishing her breakfast with bread and honey, when Tom was commanded to enter the palace and produce his pie.

He put it down, and then the king came in. Tom bowed low to the ground, and when asked, confessed that he had been imprisoned for singing, and that he had made a pie—an extraordinary pie—which would astonish everybody.

"It is nearly dinner time, your Majesty," said the head-cook, who superintended the royal banquet. "Shall we then serve the pie?"

"Yes," replied the king. "It is nearly twelve o'clock, and I am hungry. Ring the bell."

The bell was rung. All the courtiers, the guests and the grandees came.

The banquet-hall was filled with people; the tables seemed to bend beneath the heavy and splendid presents, while the king went round tasting and inspecting the curious dishes, and rewarding the givers as they deserved.

At the very end was Tom's pie.

"Is this your dainty dish, boy?" said the king. "There is nothing curious in this."

"Begging your Majesty's pardon, I think you will be surprised when you see it cut open."

"Open it then, young sir," said the king.

All the courtiers came as near to the king and queen as they could.

Tom took a knife, and very cautiously, for fear of hurting the birds, he cut a piece out of the top crust and removed it.

In a moment the blackbirds, which had been cramped up, stretched out their necks, and began to sing loudly, as they had sung to Tom from under the straw hat.

The king was astonished and delighted. "Never did I see such a wonderful thing!" he exclaimed. "Young man, ask for what you please."

"Pardon me, your Majesty, and let the birds go free too."

"You and your birds are free," said the king; "I pardon you. Come in after dinner and sing to us."

Then Tom let the blackbirds go. One flew into the garden, and pecked the nose of the girl who was hanging out the Court suits, and when Tom came to sing after dinner, he added a verse to the rhyme, thus—

"The king was in his counting-house, counting out [illegible]
The queen was in the parlor, eating bread and honey;
The maid was in the garden hanging out the clothes,
When up came a blackbird and pecked off her nose."

After the dinner Tom went home, and never afterwards did he offend any one by his ill-timed singing. And there's the end of my story.

RABBITS IN MILLIONS.—Thinking that the animal would be profitable in the new country some speculator introduced seven rabbits in 1860 in New Zealand. Since that time they have increased so rapidly that between 1875 and 1884 55,000,000 rabbit skins were exported, the supply of 1884 being 9,800,000 skins, the contribution of the preceding year having been about the same.

At first sight these figures seem to represent an enormous profit, but in reality they represent a considerable loss, the sum paid for killing the rabbits and dressing their skins for the market far exceeding the money for which they are sold.

Could they be let alone the landowners would be only too glad, but they continue to increase to such an extent that, unless their numbers were kept down, every sheep farm would have to be abandoned, as, indeed, has been the case in more than one instance, many small farmers have been ruined.

The rabbit is utterly destructive to pasture land, not only eating the grass close to the ground, but even pulling up the roots when the grass is finished.

Wire fence sunk deeply in the ground, affords the only hope of checking the animals, but after a while, finding they cannot force their way through it, they burrow under.

A well known sheep breeder was forced to abandon a "run" of 250,000 acres. Various methods of exterminating the rabbit have been tried.

In December, 1885, 300 stoats and weasels were sent to New-Zealand, for the purpose of being turned loose into the rabbit burrows and destroying the inmates. This was the sixth consignment within two years. What success this importation may produce seems rather doubtful, as the introduction of a new animal is always a very dangerous experiment.

In fact, it recalls the well-known experiences of the Laccadives, where cats were sent to eat the rats which destroyed the crowns of the palm trees, but preferred to stay on the ground and eat fish that were plentiful on the shore. Then some snakes were sent, but only frightened the inhabitants.

Then mongooses were sent, and found that it was much easier to eat the poultry than to climb the palm trees after rats. At last, owls were sent to drive the rats to the ground, where the rats and the mongooses could get at them.

The result was that the interlopers were destroyed, the inhabitants preferring the rats alone to the rats, plus the cat, mongoose, snake, and owl.

Australia suffers as much as New-Zealand from the depredations of the rabbit. In Queensland, which the rabbit has not as yet reached, great efforts are being made to keep it out of the Province.

Tenders have been accepted for 2,550 miles of fencing wire and 450 miles of wire netting of small mesh.

THE MIND is largely dependent for its strength and clearness of vision upon the purity of the life. It is true that a man should know what is right in order to do right; but it is also true that he must be in the habit of doing right in order to make such knowledge of any practical value. For example, one who is accustomed to live wisely and to avoid whatever he believes injurious learns one day through a reliable source that a certain article of diet of which he is fond, or a certain habit that he has acquired, is decidedly harmful, and he at once discontinues it. Another, accustomed to self-indulgence, receives the same instruction, and makes no change in conduct. The intellect of each has been appealed to alike, and their knowledge of the point in question is equal; but in the one case the habit of right-doing makes it operative, in the other the habit of wrong-doing makes it inoperative.

THE SYMPATHETIC FRIEND.—A really sympathetic friend prompts, advises, controls, spurs on the exertion, and, in short, exercises an incalculable influence. Many men are too self-contained and self-assertive to wish for such a friendship; but many, on the other hand, spend their lives seeking for it in vain. They are only, as it were, half themselves without the sympathetic nature at their side, and they remain stunted, half developed, to the end, like a plant which has tried to grow in the bitter wind of March, and has never known an hour's genial sunshine.

BE not too brief in conversation, lest you be not understood; nor too diffuse, lest you be troublesome.

THE ROSARY.

BY A. Y. R.

I have strung them on a golden string,
  Those dated days of ours;
Like diamond stars is their glittering,
  Their perfume like summer flowers;
And when I sit in the dusk alone,
  When the long "day's dark" is over and done,
I take my Rosary from its nest,
  Hidden warmly away in my breast,
And tell my beads with a lingering touch,
  My beads that recall and mean so much,
And live again through each little thing
  Of the past and its precious flowers;
Through the tears and the smiles that ever cling
  Around our sweet past hours.

I gathered them softly, one by one,
  From Memory's border-land.
Some lay full in the noonday sun,
  And some nestled deep in the sand.
Some were o'ergrown by the verdant turf;
  And some lay stumbled amid the surf,
That chafes forever upon the shore,
  Where Time is breathing, "No more, no more."
And some were set sodden in frost,
  That Hope shrank from them as something lost;
But Love smiled down from his stand,
  And watched till my task was done,
As I strung them with soft and tender hand,
  The treasures my search had won.

Oh, cruel time and this may do
  Full many a bitter deed,
Since all that we may plead and woo,
  Cannot check or change their speed:
Much we may dream of much we may trust,
  Will fade, like the rose of a day, to dust;
The hope we cherished may stab and part;
  The reed we leant on may pierce the heart;
But nothing can dim the tender shine
  Clinging about these jewels of mine;
And never in vain, for me or for you,
  Can Memory's magic plead,
For pure and rounded, and rich and true,
  Is every threaded bead!

TO THE POINT.

Spartan brevity of speech is still sometimes amusingly illustrated. A most worthy man, unaccustomed to public speeking, being suddenly called upon to address a Sunday school, rose to his feet, and, after vainly struggling for utterence, at last hoarsely muttered: "Dear children, don't ever play with powder." The following gallant toast was lately given at a military dinner in Carolina: "The ladies—our arms their protection—their arms our reward."

"Don't eat stale Q cumbers. They will W up" is the terse advice of some wit. Announcements on shop signs expressed in the succinct style of one connected with a certain restaurant in New York, should serve as startling advertisements: "Lunch 75 cents; square meal, 1 dollar; perfect gorge, 1 dollar 25 cents." In the same city, a shopkeeper is said to have stuck upon his door this laconic advertisement: "A boy wanted." On going to his shop next morning, he beheld a smiling little urchin in a basket, with the following pithy label: "Here he is!"

A penny-a-liner would hardly find much employment on the Kansas paper which informed the public that "Mr. Blank of Missouri got to owning horses that didn't belong to him, and the next thing he knew he couldn't get his feet down to the ground." Lynched probably. A Western writer, speaking of a new play just written by a gentleman of Cincinnatti, says: "The unities are admirably observed; the dullness which commences with the first act, never flags for a moment until the curtain falls."

The characteristics of several nations have been summed up in the following concise form: The first thing a Spaniard does on founding a colony is to build a gallows: a Portuguese, to build a church: an Englishman a drinking-booth: and a Frenchman, a dancing-floor.

A cobbler visited one of the large manufactories the other day, and for the first time in his life saw shoes made by machinery. "What do you think of that?" asked the foreman. "It beats awl," was the laconic and significant reply.

A "sensible" woman, as Dr. Abernethy would have called her, was discovered by a shy man, who made her a rather original proposal. He bought a wedding ring, and sent it to the lady, inclosing a sheet of note-paper with the brief question, "Does it fit?" By return of post he received for answer: 'Beautifully.'

It is related that Makart, the great Viennese painter, is even more taciturn than Von Moltke, the man who is silent in seven languages.

An American, who had been told that the best way to get on friendly terms with the artist would be to play chess with him at the cafe to which he resorted nightly, watched his opportunity, and, as Makart's opponent rose, slipped into his chair. At last his dream was to be realised, he was to spend the evening in Makart's society. The painter signed to him to play, and the game began, and went on with no other sound than the moving of the pieces. At last the American made the winning move, and exclaimed, "Mate!" Up rose Makart in disgust and stalked out, saying angrily to a friend who asked why he left so early: "Oh, I can't stand playing with a chatter-box!"

The expressions used by some boys and girls if written as pronounced would look like a foreign language. Specimens of boys' conversation like the following may be called shorthand talking: "Warjego lasnight?" "Hadder skate." "Jerfind the ice hard'ngood? "Yes; hard'nough." "Jer goerlone?" "No; Bill'n Joe wenterlong." "Howlate jerstay? "Pastate." "Lemmeknow wenyergoin, wonher? I wanter go'n showyer howto skate." "H—m, ficodin' skate better'n you I'd sell out 'nquit." "Well, we'll iryernce 'nseeifyercan."

The well known answer of the Greeks to the Persian king before the battle of Thermopylae, was rivalled by the despatch of General Suvaroff to the Russian Empress: "Hurrah! Ismail's ours!" The Empress returned an answer equally brief: "Hurrah! Field Marshal!"

There are some quaint and pithy epistles on record. Quin, when offended by Rich, went away in resentment and wrote: "I am at Bath." The answer was as laconic but not quite so civil: "Stay there."

Sibbald the editor of the "Chronicles of Scottish Poetry," resided in London for three or four years, during which time his friends in Scotland were ignorant not only of his movements, but even of his address. In the long run, his brother, a Leith merchant, contrived to get a letter conveyed to him, the object of which was to inquire into his circumstances and to ask where he lived. His reply ran as follows: "DEAR BROTHER—I live in So-ho, and my business is so so—Yours, JAMES SIBBALD."

Concise and to the point was the curious letter sent by a farmer to a schoolmaster as an excuse for his son's absence from school: "Cepatomtogostatrin." This meant kep' at 'ome to go a-taterin'—gathering potatoes. A Canadian freshman once wrote home to his father- "Dear Papa—I want a little change." The fond parent replied by the next post: "Dear Charlie—Just wait for it. Time brings change to everybody."

Briefer than these was an epistle of Emile de Girardin to his second wife, with whom he lived on most unfriendly terms. The house was large enough to permit them to dwell entirely separate from one another. One day, Madame de Girardin had an important communication to make to her husband. Taking a small sheet of paper she wrote: "The Boudoir to the Library: Would like to go to Switzerland." M. de Girardin, imitating her concise style, responded: "The Library to the Boudoir: Go." That was all.

One of the most laconic wills on record ran thus: "I have nothing; I owe a great deal—the rest I give to the poor."

Grains of Gold.

Beware of small temptations.

Kind words cost no more than unkind ones.

Better pass a danger once than be always in fear.

Blow the wind never so fast it will lower at last.

A thousand probabilities do not make one truth.

Never let an opportunity to do a kind act pass by you.

The best mode of instruction is to practice what we teach.

The first degree of folly is to think one's self wise, the next to tell others so; Sir Thomas Overbury, to despise all counsel.

That which was bitter to endure may be sweet to remember.

There is not a word in the language so disregarded as prudence.

Examine into your own shortcomings, rather than those of others.

Think of heaven with hearty purpose and strong hope to get there.

True eloquence consists in saying all that is proper, and nothing more.

A wise man's heart is like a broad hearth that keeps the coals (his passions) from burning the house.

Few things are impracticable in themselves; and it is for want of application, rather than of means, that men fail of success.

Femininities.

It is only once in a life that the average man loves his neighbor as himself.

The joy of the spirit indicates its strength. All healthy things are sweet-tempered.

Sugar-house parties are quite popular among the sweet girls of the present period.

It is usually unmarried women who write on the subject of "How to Manage a Husband."

Powdered rice, sprinkled upon lint and applied to fresh wounds, will stop bleeding, provided an artery is not cut.

The rage for collecting postage stamps is said to mean the increase in France. Paris reports 150 firms in the business.

Who says you cannot reason with a woman? You can reason with a woman. And generally that is all the good it will do.

It is a fact that fainting has gone out of fashion. Whatever may be the cause, ladies faint now only on the stage and in novels.

Earrings are declared to be unhealthy by a medical authority, and diamond earrings particularly. Engaged young men should paste this item in their hats.

If sleep be thorough, a short spell will do more good than a much longer duration of sleep that is incomplete and imperfect both in its nature and in its effects.

A tasteful woman can make a garret beautiful and homelike, and at little cost; for the beauty of home depends more on educated and refined taste than upon mere wealth.

We cannot choose our neighbors on this earth, but it is well to cultivate assimilation or at least forbearance. Perhaps we will not be able to choose our neighbors above the earth either.

Belva Lockwood, the female lawyer, nominates Matilda Joslyn Gage, of Syracuse, to be a U. S. Senator from New York, but says she is not herself a candidate for the Presidency in 1888.

A Massachusetts maiden is said to have lost control of her jaw as a result of the pernicious habit of chewing gum. Ah, lots of people whom one knows must have been victims of this habit.

A lady who was a member of a class studying art concluded a recitation on Benjamin Haydon, the English painter, by stating that "toward the close of his life he committed suicide."

A magazine asks, "What is true joy?" True joy is what a woman feels when a committee at a country fair declares that her crazy quilt is prettier than all the assembled crazy quilts of her neighbors.

A Belleville, Illinois, servant girl went to sleep one afternoon and did not wake up till forty hours later. When she awoke she was naturally much incensed to find that she had been defrauded of two evenings out.

We always know what to expect when a public speaker says: "One word more and I am done." And when a woman exclaims: "There's no use talking;" we understand she is going to talk until her tongue is tired.

A female schoolteacher in one of the southern counties of Illinois was presented with a fence rail, a tin can filled with tar and a small bag of feathers by a wrathful parent of one of her pupils whom she had punished.

In the primary schools of Albany, N. Y., many of the little ones are accustomed to kiss their teachers at the close of school. The little colored girls kiss the teacher on one cheek and the pale-face darlings kiss her on the other.

They were in a west bound street car. "Where have you been, dear?" "Oh, I've been shopping all day long." "So have I. What did you get?" "Oh, I didn't get anything; did you?" "No; but I priced almost everything I saw."

Too rude for anything. Miss Youngstove: "Here is a telegram I want sent at once, please." Operator: "Yes, miss." He then proceeds to count the words. Miss Y.: "Stop, sir! How dare you read it? That message is confidential."

A terrible threat. Mother: "Now, Bertie, it's very wrong in you to disobey me as you do!" Bertie: "Yes'm." Mother: "I'm afraid I shall have to adopt strict measures with you. The very next time you don't mind, you will have to go to bed barefoot."

"Are you going tobogganing this evening?" "No, indeed, I'm not. The idea of my wearing a blanket suit and all that! It's preposterous!" "Well, with your figure, perhaps it is." So long as the toboggan slide is between these two it will always be frozen.

A woman is bound to have the last word. When the editor of a Western paper remonstrated with the principal contributor to the Poets' Corner of his valuable sheet for writing on both sides of her paper she quietly retorted: "Well, and don't you print on both sides of yours?"

A worried woman rushed into the Central Police Station of Montreal the other afternoon. She asked if any stray children had been found by the police, and was informed that there were five in the different stations, whereupon she exclaimed, "I have lost seven! Where are the other two?"

A machine has been invented which will sew on buttons as fast as seven girls could do the work, but when it comes to sitting up on Sunday night with a young man, seven machines can't begin to do the work of one girl. There is no fear of any invention driving the girls out of market.

Pendant pin cushions are in the form of pond lilies, white or pink. The heart of the lily forms the cushion. It is made of satin the tint of the lily or gold colored, firmly padded. The petals of the flower are of two pieces of satin of the proper shape, sewed together and kept in form by a thin layer of wadding.

Macon, Ga., has an old blind woman who imagines and maintains that she can see by shaking a piece of tin in the direction of objects she wants to look at. She has a fragment of old tin roofing which she always carries, and thus she sees. People who know her say that she can readily recognize her neighbors by shaking this piece of tin in their faces.

Masculinities.

The less wit a man has, the less he knows he wants it.

After the sweets of married life depart the family jars remain.

When a man's coat is threadbare, it is easy to pick a hole in it.

Social leaders in New York are using cinnamon as a perfume.

Good thoughts are no better than good dreams unless they are executed.

Imprudence is the message sent to invite disease, poverty and other evils.

If you want to succeed in life, be thorough in your work, whatever it is.

Recreation is but an aside in life. Employment is the source and means of content.

A man may talk and talk and not be a bore if he talks to you about your good points.

The praise of others may be of use in teaching us not what we are but what we ought to be.

Some men have lives "full of wormwood and gall." The wormwood is barely perceptible in many.

There is no particular harm in riding a hobby if you don't take up the whole road while riding it.

A demand for the enforcement of a local law against smoking in the streets is mildly agitating Boston.

The son of the King of Fiji, who died lately, was educated in England, but on his return to Fiji relapsed into native customs.

A woman handed a valise and a letter to a telegraph operator at Grand Forks, D. T., and told him to send them over the wires.

Why are young ladies nowadays like bells?—Because you can never find out their metal until you have given them a ring.

An experienced philosopher and sportsman observes that it is easier to lug a heavy shot-gun ten hours through an impenetrable swamp than to put up a clothes-line.

He was so benevolent a man, says a famous wit, so merciful a man that, in his mistaken compassion, he would have held an umbrella over a duck in a shower of rain.

"Which is correct," asked Mrs. Coldtea, "The biscuit are light or the biscuits are light?" "Neither," replied the first floor front. "The biscuit are heavy to correct."

Never forget that you and your servant are made of the same clay, though you may have been cast in different molds. You have home, husband and children; she nothing.

"What is a hero?" asks an exchange. A hero is a man who can pass a crowd of boys engaged in making snow-balls without turning his head to make sure that they have no designs on him.

A novelty that makes the wide awake Chicagoan smile is a miniature windmill worn as a scarf-pin. Little fans of silver fly around with a pleasing buzz when a breath of air strikes them.

"Mother, didn't you say all the babies came from heaven?" "Yes, my son." "Did poor Charley come from there, too?" "Yes." "Well, no wonder the angels bounced him—he's such a howler."

Convulsions may frequently be cut short like magic by turning the patient on his left side. The nausea as an after effect of chloroform or other narcotic may be generally controlled in the same manner.

Thoughts are the food of a man's mind; and as the mind feeds, so will it grow. If it feeds on coarse and foul food, coarse and foul will it grow. If it feeds on pure and refined food, pure and refined will it grow.

"Pa, have you got the hydrophobia?" "No, Bertie; what makes you ask that question?" "Well, I heard ma say to-day that you got awfully bitten when you thought she had a fortune in her own name."

Now is the time to look around for last year's snow-shovel. If you have any trouble in finding it, look in the parlor over the piano. The chances are that your oldest daughter decorated it and hung it up last spring.

A bedroom should never be sombre, the brighter the better. White scrim curtains with antique lace border and insertion are liked for chamber windows. The walls should be of a light tint, the pictures restful and pleasing.

A Harvard professor has made the calculation that if men were really as big as they sometimes feel there would be room in the United States for only two professors, three lawyers, two doctors and a reporter on a Philadelphia paper.

Signor Camini, a Venetian, is credited with the ability to speak and write fluently no less than 32 languages and dialects. It would be interesting to know which particular one he finds the most useful when he falls over a wheelbarrow.

A little fellow asked his parents to take him to church with them. They said he must wait until he was older. "Well," was the shrewd suggestion in response, "you'd better take me now, for when I get bigger I may not want to go."

If a Japanese wishes to smoke in the company of others, he will first make a bow—signifying "By your leave"—to the rest of the company. After receiving permission to smoke from one of higher rank, it is polite for a Japanese to bow in the direction of the lowest seat.

Chicago dame: "You seem very fond of that Mrs. De Cash." New York dame: "Yes, I wish you could meet her. She is the most self-sacrificing woman in New York." "Indeed?" "I should say so. Why, her husband gave her three hundred dollars to buy a new parasol, and she spent every cent of it for doctors' fees and medicine." "Ah, I see—" "Yes, poor little pet; but I really don't believe the dog would have lived if she had not."

Recent Book Issues.

"Doctor Cupid," by Rhoda Broughton, is a pretty story, sweet in sentiment and full of delicacy in the telling. The plot is very good and the character-drawing is excellent, the two girls, Prue and Peggy, deserving high praise as strong and highly finished studies. The book has most of the qualities of its author's earlier stories, and her style is as bright as ever, if not even somewhat more graceful and polished than in the past. Published by Lippincott & Co.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

The Interstate Publishing Company, of Boston, issue a monthly entitled "The Grammar School," which is filled with most excellent reading matter and pictures. Nothing would serve better as reading exercises in schools than these useful little books.

The Sanatarian is a monthly magazine, treating of health subjects in their more general aspect, that has no superior, if it has an equal in the language. We can commend it to all who are interested in these matters as a publication well calculated to keep them fully informed of the most important moves being made in the great questions of national or local sanitation. Published at No. 113 Fulton street, New York.

Cassell's Family Magazine for January, presents a frontispiece of rare beauty, printed in sepia, entitled, "What Shall I Say?" The lovely girl evidently holds a proposal letter in her hand, and the pleasant countenance looks as though she would say, "Yes!" Two new serials are begun in this number; one by the author of "Sweet Christabel," entitled 'Lile's Fitful Fever," which promises to be as interesting as this accomplished writer's former stories; the other is entitled "A Step in the Dark," and also promises well. There are two capital short stories, and the usual variety of interesting and valuable matter, including the ever interesting to the ladies Paris and London fashion letters. The illustrations are numerous and beautifully executed. Cassell & Co., New York.

The January number of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* presents a splendid array of names: Julian Hawthorne, Sidney Luska, Austin Dobson, Rose Elizabeth Cleveland, Walt Whitman, Edgar Fawcett and Barrett Wendell. Julian Hawthorne contributes the complete novel "Sinfire." Sidney Luska has a novelette called "The Story of Angola." Austin Dobson has a brilliant little satirical poem, "The Water of Gold." Miss Cleveland's contribution also is a satirical poem, "The Dilemma of the Nineteenth Century," all upon the woman question. Walt Whitman, under the title of "My Book and I," discusses his own poetical theories and gives some valuable and entertaining bits of self-criticism. Edgar Fawcett asks "Should Critics be Gentlemen?" Barrett Wendell has an essay on "Social Life at Harvard." A short criticism of "The George Movement," is by Wm. H. Babcock. The Monthly Gossip is unusually bright and entertaining. Published by Lippincott & Co.

MUSICAL FIREWOOD.—When Ole Bull, the renowned violinist, was staying in Paris in 1840, he returned home late one evening from a concert, and as the night was cold he ordered his man to make a fire in his room. The latter dragged towards the fireplace a huge box, on which the word "Firewood" was painted in large letters. In answer to Ole Bull's astonished inquiry, the servant told him that the box had been delivered that day at noon by his master's orders, as he thought. On being broken open the box was found to contain twenty-two violins and the following letter: "Great Master—The undersigned, being members of various amateur philharmonic societies, hereby declare that they will henceforth cease to perform on the accompanying instruments. The same wood from which Ole Bull can draw life, love, sorrow, passion and melody, is only to be regarded as—fuel for the flames in the hands of the undersigned, who therefore request the maestro to make an auto-da-fe of the enclosures, and to look upon the ascending smoke as incense offered to his genius by penitent dabblers in the noble art." This curious epistle bore the signatures of twenty-two young men. Three days afterwards Ole Bull gave a dinner, to which he invited all the senders of the valuable "firewood." Each guest had lying before him one of the violins referred to, and by its side a gold ring with the inscription, "Solitude and Perseverance,"—a piece of seasonable advice to the faint-hearted dilettante, and a symbolic indication of the means by which the virtuoso himself had attained to fame.

A RESPECTABLE woman was found unconscious in the streets at Long Island City the other night, and was taken to the station house. The sergeant thought her intoxicated and put the woman in a cell. Next morning it was discovered that a paralytic shock and not liquor had caused her unconsciousness, and she was removed to her home. She died a few hours later.

A Great Offer.

No matter in what part you live, you had better write to Hallett & Co., Portland, Maine, without delay; they will send you free information about work that you can do and live at home, at a profit from $5 to $25 and upwards daily. A number have earned over $50 in a day. Both sexes. All ages. You are started in business free. Capital not needed. Every worker who takes hold at once is absolutely sure of a snug little fortune. Now is the time.

At the Darlings.

BY M. B.

POOR Mrs. Darling lay ill with one of her bad headaches. She was quite a martyr to them and to nervous exhaustion; and everybody from her devoted doctor downwards—admired her sweetness and patience, and wondered why Providence had afflicted her with such poor health, and such a commonplace trifling husband as Mr. Darling. When they thought of her gaunt sister-in-law, Miss Darling (who lived in the house), their wonder was too great for words, and could only find expression in shakings of pitying heads which meant, "Ah! what a trial to so sweet a woman to live under the same roof with so sour a one."

Mrs. Darling's bed-chamber was shaded from the common cheap daylight by uncommon and expensive curtains of some soft shining material of peacock-blue tint, as she was considered too fair and precious to surround with anything vulgar or unclean. The air was fragrant with aromatic vinegar, as the unadulterated air of Heaven was thought too tasteless and uninviting to find entrance into her delicately chiselled nostrils! The floor was guiltless of the general bad qualities of floors, and had been educated out of its primitive hardness and creakiness by successive applications of carpeting, over which a rich, subdued Turkey pattern lay as if it were quite at home, and would only like dainty feet to rest on it.

And Mrs. Darling's bed! It was indeed a thing of beauty, with its peacock-blue hangings and its heavy fringes, its snow-white coverlet and its carved pillars.

Before it lay a small rosewood table, bright with crystal-stoppered bottles of various hues, and blue china cup and saucer. Also a gilt-edged text-book, a birthday gift from the doctor's sister.

And what shall we say of the invalid herself, the centre of all this beauty and fragrance?

She lay, half reclining on a pile of frilled and lace-trimmed "pillow-shams" (as I am told they are called, being too nice for heads to lie on, and being used as ornaments mostly), with a pale pink Shetland shawl about her shoulders.

It was arranged to lie loosely about her white throat, and to show just a tiny edge of an exquisite night-dress.

Her brown hair waved about her smooth brow in a sort of simple, babyish fashion, which was very charming, and her blue eyes were soft and deep like the sky in a June twilight.

Her features were not strongly marked, and were mainly useful in being a foundation for lovely pink and white flesh. And her hands were white and plump, and bore several shining circlets on their fingers.

And now would you care to see the other chambers of the villa in which the lady lay? They will not take long to describe; for her bed-room had been the one spacious apartment of the house—the conventional drawing-room of the modern villa—to whose size and shape all the others are sacrificed.

And as her delicate nerves demanded quiet, and her feeble lungs demanded large breathing space, the "drawing-room" was removed in name, next door, but all its little ornaments and amenities left in their old places.

Then there was Miss Darling's room. An angular, cold-looking, uncurtained one, with a severe wimged iron bedstead at one side, and a painted chest of drawers at the other.

A small square of carpet lay securely tacked in the middle of the floor, and nothing soft or superfluous tempted the eye or limbs to rest or repose.

Miss Darling was a tall, high cheek-boned woman of uncertain age, rather sharp in tongue and temper, as well as feature, and scarcely ever to be seen "sitting down."

Either giving a supplementry sweep after the servant-maid, or brandishing a duster like a defiant banner, Miss Darling was always busy.

And she could make splendid soups and gravies (out of shabby material), which agreed with the most delicate digestive powers, and never kept anybody waiting too long for them; so that you will see she was a woman of a thousand, although not by any means "a sweet woman," like the dear suffering one upstairs.

Mr. Darling's room was at the back of the house downstairs, as he had to go out early in the morning to business, and could not disturb his wife's slumbers by the sound of his boots going up or down. A frayed old leather razor-case was its chief ornament, vis-a-vis to a rather bald clothes-brush. These two articles had faced each other so long that they looked jaded and tired; but they harmonised well enough with the rather bald-headed little man with restless eyes who used them.

Those restless eyes of his wandered about all day with a seeking look in them, but they rested and refreshed themselves for half an hour every evening, when he stole upstairs in his old slippers to tap gently at the door of his wife's chamber.

The usual whisper accompanied the tap, "May I come in, my dear?" and after the door was open he sat down humbly by the bedside, looking fondly and faithfully at his cherished idol, and telling her in hushed and measured tones all the pleasant bits of gossip he had collected in town during the day.

All the unpleasant bits he kept to himself. His speech ran like a small mail-coach outside or downstairs, but he never forgot to put on the drag when he entered those sacred precincts.

The servant maid was not a model of elegance, and Mr. Darling's tea dishes were not remarkable for cleanliness, but he ate and drank gratefully, feeling that everything was good enough for him, and thought with pleasure of the dainty little "afternoon tea-set" which he had invested in not long ago, after some conscientious qualms.

Nobody else lived in the house but young George Darling, who had been brought up in it, had run off to sea; and was currently reported to have been a scapegrace and to have broken his mother's heart.

On the day which we mentioned at the beginning of our story, Mr. Darling sat in the dingy parlor with his head resting on his hands—for hours together.

All day he had sat without going out. He had not brushed his shiny coat with the old bald brush before putting it on, neither had he stood before the glass while buttoning his collar; so you may imagine he was not the dapper little man who was seen hurrying along the street every morning about eight o'clock.

For months back he had been pinching and planing, scraping and saving, to make a penny do the work of a dime, till the struggle had nearly worn out his wits.

And now he had lost all hope, and murmured to himself—

"I am a ruined man! I am a ruined man!"

His business had once been good, but the small man's brains had at no time been of the brightest, so that when Mrs. Darling's wants and wishes increased he lost his head and forgot how to do proportion, and thus his books and ledgers fell into dire disorder.

The loss of a clever young partner prevented him finding out blunders, and it was only when he could not possibly find cash or credit to buy Mrs. Darling's favorite kind of wine—the week before—that he realized his true position.

"Poor thing! How can I forgive myself for bringing her to this, and she so gentle and good?"

Poor Mr. Darling! He had robbed himself of every luxury of diet and of dress that his wife might retain the comforts of wealthier days.

He had emptied his other rooms that hers might be replenished from time to time with new brightness. He had worshipped his ideal woman with a humble heart, and now he sat in despair, waiting till the usual time for his visit to her, that he might not alarm her by appearing at an unusual hour.

At last it was afternoon. He went stealthily to the front door and opened it noiselessly, then rang with his familiar gesture.

Molly, the maid, came up, and he allowed her to close it behind him with the usual bang, at the same time signalling to her dumbly not to express surprise at his proceedings.

"Well, my dear," he began, "have you had a good day?"

"Oh! my poor nerves are sadly tried in this wretched house. The neighbors next door have been nailing down carpets, and each stroke goes through my head. Hand me the lavender-water, dear. Be thankful you have not an organisation like mine, to suffer day by day as I do."

"Poor angel! I wish I could take you to a quieter home, and more like yourself," sighed Mr. Darling; but at the thought the little man broke down, and not another word would come.

"Well, Mr. Darling, I see nothing to overcome you in that wish. It is quite right and natural that you should feel so. You know I have never had my proper position since I married; and I must say you have not shown the energy I had a right to expect from you.

He was not listening, he was thinking—thinking how best he was to tell his tale.

"Wife, my business is gone! I must call a meeting of my creditors. I should have stopped long ere this, but tried for your sake——"

He hid his face.

Mrs. Darling lifted her head from the frilled pillow-shams; not weakly or slowly, but with the sort of energy that she had expected from her husband.

"Is this what you come to tell me, you poor, useless creature, you?——" She stopped for an expressive word, and stopped again as she saw his head sink on his breast, and his arm slip listlessly from the chair.

He had fainted from strong emotion. He had not heard his wife's words; it was only a sense of his own unworthiness that made his head swim and his limbs faint.

And Mrs. Darling wasted no more words on him, but rang the bell and relapsed into fragility. Her sister-in-law came in to find her brother slowly gathering himself together on his chair, and opening his eyes, and the lady scarce able to speak with a commanding headache.

"Attend to her, Hannah," said the little man "she needs all your care;" and he slipped down-stairs, and laid his head on the table till he fell asleep, worn out.

With a pillow almost as hard as Jacob's, came a vision almost as bright; and the good spirits who brought the dream saw Mr. Darling's shiny old coat, as if it were a shining new robe; and his weary, folded arms, like a pair of great folded white wings.

And they knew him to be almost one of themselves, for the angel within him was formed and enlarged that night more than usual.

And when it is quite ready to fly, some say it will leave the dingy parlor and the stinted tea-table for ever.

So he goes out earlier than he used to, and comes in later; and makes up other merchant's books instead of his own, and endures slights abroad and silence at home, till the day comes.

Hannah Darling rubbed the sufferer's poor brow with firm and patient hand for an hour or so, and Molly subjugated her rebellious locks into a little calm before bringing a cup of tea—unasked—up to her adored mistress.

She would not at any time have thought of going into this room unwashed or untidy. The poor girl's eyes were wet, for she had a suspicion of coming misfortune; and, therefore (the angel in her being begun), she chose the prettiest cup and daintiest cream-jug to tempt Mrs. Darling's blue eyes.

"Oh, Hannah! How can you let Molly come in here? You know how the sound of her heavy foot hurts me. You have no feeling for my weakness, or you would bring my tea yourself."

Poor Molly set down her little tray with a great gulp of a sigh, and crept on tiptoe out of the room, wishing herself beautiful and light-footed, so as she might serve her beautiful mistress better.

And tall Hannah stood hearkening to wailings and self-bewailings with unwearied love and sympathy, though with weary limbs and burning eyes.

And while she stood the angel within grew—beautifully proportioned, a noble, perfect, womanly angel (no high cheek-bones, or angular arms;) but she knew nothing about its growth, and saw nothing but the fair face which lay in the snowy linen and lace.

So the sweet woman who is held up by all the husbands in the neighborhood (as an example of suffering patience) to their more unattractive wives, is of incalculable use in the world. She works the machinery that makes angels.

And history as well as experience tells us that she will be bestowed on the world so long as she is needed, for no one else can do the work so well; and surely no work is so well worthy of being well done.

Some observers say that occasionally the factory turns out—not angels—but—well—articles not so pleasant to name, nor so useful to humanity.

If so, the material has been to blame most likely, for we cannot possibly think of blaming the mode of working, seeing that the general results are so admirable.

CURIOUS LAND TENURES.—The study of the land tenures is one which sorely taxes the thinking powers, especially when the study is directed to the English system of landed property as elucidated in Blackstone and other old authorities. Yet, even the perplexing tangles about feoffments, free socage, livery of seisin and so on, is occasionally enlivened by some really interesting passages.

Common lands in many parts of England have been held, and are held still in some instances, by the fulfilment of curious pledges.

The sheriffs of the county of Norfolk held at one time, and we presume they still hold, thirty acres of land, forming part of a certain manor in the county, on consideration of their presenting to the king, whenever he should be in England at the time of the first catch of herrings every season, four-and-twenty of the best of the fish.

Yarmouth had a charter conferred upon it on condition that it should send to these same sheriffs annually a hundred herrings baked in flour and twenty pasties, the sheriffs having to pass them on to the lord of the manor of East Charlton.

Alnwick freemen to this day, it is stated, enjoy the right of pasturing their cattle upon certain common lands on very whimsical conditions indeed.

It is said that King John was once travelling by night in the town on horseback, and, owing to the deplorable state of the roads, his majesty floundered into a pond. He was so incensed that he made it a condition of the charter he granted to the town that every freeman should go through that pond.

Accordingly every inhabitant of Alnwick who proposes to take up his freedom must wade through this water and make the round of the common. This ceremony is performed—or, at all events, used to be performed—by several together, all mounted on horseback, dressed in white, and wearing swords by their sides.

PAIN and sickness, shame and reproach, poverty and old age, nay, death itself, considering the shortness of their duration and the advantage we may reap from them, do not deserve the name of evils. A good mind may bear up under them with fortitude, with indolence, and with cheerfulness of heart. The tossing of the tempest does not discompose him, which he is sure will eventually bring him to a joyful harbor.

THE foundation of three-fourths of the cases of consumption is laid before the age of 25 years; in women, during their teens. The hereditary element is not of special account as a cause of consumption, as less than 25 per cent of cases are clearly of consumptive parentage.

ANGELICA: "Augustus, I suppose you think I am only a giddy young school-girl, but I'd have you to know that I am fully as old as I look." Augustus: "Dear me! I was in hopes you were much younger!"

ONE of the ruling causes of disease and premature death in large cities is found in that exhausting strain of the mental energies in the struggle for subsistence—a death race for bread.

HAD we not faults of our own we should take less pleasure in observing those of others.

Humorous.

AN OLD TIMER.

Often I think in my trim swallow-tail,
At parties where flowers their fragrance exhale,
Of times when my pate was a bower of curls,
And I danced with the grandmas of all the dear girls.

I look on the charms that their beauties unfold—
They seem the same damsels, while I have grown old,
I feel like white winter without a warm ray;
They look like the roses that blossom in May.

But winter may look with its shiver and chill,
Through the window at flowers that bloom on the sill:
And I may ask Edith with ringlets of jet
If she will dance with me the next minuet.

I go to all parties, receptions, first nights,
I'm a merry old bird in my fanciful flights;
I may look like the winter, a snowy old thing,
But deep in my heart dwells the spirit of spring.

I know that I am not as old as I look,
My voice has no crack, and my back has no crook;
And happy I'd be if May, Maud and Lucille
Would treat me as one who's as young as I feel.

Those who toil and spin—Bicycle riders.

The best thing yet discovered for seasickness—Port.

Cashier doesn't always mean cash here. It sometimes means cash in Canada.

A new kind of stove is called "The Infant." It ought to be painted yeller.

The corset is a paradox. It comes to stay and at the same time goes to waist.

Christmas has the same effect on a man's salary that the sun has on a chunk of ice.

Great point of resemblance between farmers and their poultry—Both delight in full crops.

You can now go to church with the peaceful assurance that you are not likely to be awakened by flies.

There is a man in Burlington so bowlegged that when the children are playing cars they use him for a tunnel.

An ordinary small boy is never so happy as when he is standing under a safe that is being hoisted to the fifth story.

The man whose wife woke him up in church by sticking a pin in him, says he doesn't like such pointed suggestions.

"Whatever you do, my boy, begin at the bottom and work up." "But, father, suppose I were going to dig a well?"

What is the difference between a traveler in the tropics and a chiropodist?—One feels the heat and the other heals the feet.

The fact that a man has not cut his hair for ten or twelve years need not necessarily imply that he is eccentric. He may be bald.

Waiter: "I beg your pardon, sir, but it's 1 o'clock, sir." Cavely, who has lost himself a little: "Whatsh is it, waiter, yesh'erday 'r t'morrer?"

"Hullo, Mike, I hear yer on a strike." "So I am; I struck for fewer hours." "Did you succeed?" "Indeed I did. I'm not working at all now."

Collector: "How many times do you wish me to call for this money?" Debtor: "My dear sir, you need never call again. I shall not be offended."

It all depends upon one's standpoint. The snow comes down as light as feathers. But when you go out with your shovel, you will find that the snow is heavy enough.

A certain University was once said to be a learned place from the fact that most persons took some learning there, while but few brought any away with them. So it accumulated.

"I'm afraid it's not genuine," said a lady to a shopman. "Oh, yes, it is, madam," replied the polite gentleman. "All our camel's hair shawls are made of pure silk direct from the worm."

This is the season that inspires the red-nosed man with confidence. He can blame the warmth of color on the weather, and those who don't know his habits will sometimes believe him.

"Does hanging prevent murder?" is a question which agitates an Eastern State. You bet it does. Cases are very rare where a man commits murder after he has been hanged once or twice.

The line between drunk and sober is no longer defined by pronouncing "constitutional" and "truly rural." The word chrysanthemum is found to defy a tongue that is the least stiffened by drink.

"Great excitement up to our house, Billy. Ma's got an inion poultice on her earache, and pa's got a mortgage comin' due." "Hot that's nothin'. My little brother's got a marble down his scarcophagus."

A gravestone carver says that forty out of fifty epitaphs contain more or less falsehood, but he lays down his mallet and chisel to add: "However, being a man who won't lie a little to help a dead person out of a bad fix."

Kate comes upon Henry, who is playing the flute. Kate: "Why, Henry, you do that quite well; I should think you would take lessons." Henry, who has been taking lessons for the past ten years, does not feel flattered, but he makes no sign as he replies: "I have thought of it."

"I'm going to become a missionary," she said, as she gazed at him with a why-don't-he-ask-me-to-marry-him expression on her face. Looking down upon her he replied: "Don't you think you had better begin on a he—thea?" They were married in the spring under the chestnut tree.

"Mr. Jones," said the end-man of a certain black minstrel troupe, "can you tell me how to invest money so that it will go the farthest?" "No, Mr. Thompson, I am not aware that I can. May I ask how you invest money so that it will go the farthest?" "Why, I buy postage-stamps, to be sure."

THE HINDU WIDOW.

The formal period of mourning for a widow in Bengal lasts for one month with the most numerous and influential class in that part of India—the Brahmins keeping only ten days.

During this time she has to prepare h'r own food, confining herself to a single meal a day, which consists of boiled coarse rice, simplest vegetables, ghi or clarified butter, and milk; she can on no account touch meat, fish, eggs, or any delicacy at all.

She is forbidden to do up her hair and to put any scent or oil on her body. She must put on the same cotton sari day and night even when it is wet, and must eschew the pleasure of a bed and lie down on bare ground, or perhaps on a coarse blanket spread on it; in some cases she cannot even have her hair dried in the sun after her daily morning ablution, which she must go through before she can put a particle of food in her mouth.

The old women say that the soul of a man after his death ascends to heaven quickly and pleasantly in proportion to the bodily inflictions which his wife can undergo in the month after the death of her husband.

Consequently the new made widow, if not for any other reason, at least for the benefit of the soul of her departed husband, must submit to continuous abstinence and excruciating self-inflictions.

A whole month passes in this state of semi-starvation; the funeral ceremonies, which drag on till the end of that period, are all performed, and the rigid observances of the widow are all relaxed, if it may be so termed, since the only relaxation allowed to her is that she need not prepare the food with her own hands, and that she can change her clothes, but always using only plain cotton saris.

The real misery of the widow, however, begins after the first month. It is not enough that she is quite heart-broken for her deceased husband, and that she undergoes all the above mentioned bodily privations; she must also continually bear the most galling indignities and the most humiliating self-sacrifices.

She cannot take an active part in any religious or social ceremony. If there be a wedding in the house the widow must not touch or in any way interfere with the articles that are used to keep the marriage customs. During the poojahs, or religious festivals, she is but grudgingly allowed to approach near the object of veneration, and in some bigoted families the contact of a widow is supposed to pollute the materials requisite for the performance of marriage ceremonies.

The widow is, in fact, looked upon as the "evil one" of the house. If she has no son or daughter to comfort her, or if she has to pass her whole life, as is often the case, with her husband's family, her condition truly becomes a helpless one.

During any ceremony or grand occasion she has silently to look on, others around her enjoying and disporting themselves, and if some kind relation does not come to relieve her tedium she has hardly anything to do but to ruminate on her present sad, wretched condition.

Every female member of a family, whether married or unmarried, can go to parties, but a widow cannot, and if she expresses any wish to join the family on such occasions it is instantly repressed by the curt rebuke of her mother-in-law or some other relation that "she is a widow, and she must not have such wishes."

PATIENT WORKERS.—There is one class of laborers who never strike and seldom complain. They get up at five o'clock in the morning, and never go back to bed until ten or eleven o'clock at night. They work without ceasing the whole of that time, and receive no other reward than food and the plainest clothing. Though harassed by a hundred responsibilities, though driven and worried, though reproached and looked down upon, they never revolt; and they cannot organize for their own protection; not even sickness releases them from their posts. No sacrifice is deemed too great for them to make, and no incompetency in any branch of their work is excused. They die in the harness, and are supplanted as quickly as may be. These are the housekeeping wives of the laboring men.

THE sleep of the laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much, but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. A good test of one's condition is ability to sleep well. Toil that does not interfere with sleep cannot be said to be excessive. Idleness, that prevents sound and refreshing sleep and takes away the keen appetite for it, robs a man of this among other blessings of life, and makes existence empty, objectless and meaningless.

A BEGGAR, to all appearances slightly befogged, thus accosted a passer-by: "Sir, would you please give a little money to buy a bit of bread, for I am so dreadfully thirsty that I don't know where I am to get a night's lodging?"

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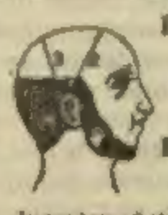

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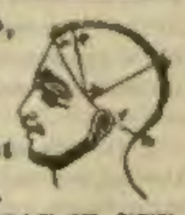

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Latest Fashion Phases.

The winter modes are remarkable for a characteristic which is not always, nor even often, in fashions new or old, they are essentially reasonable; all the exaggerations that have distinguished them of late are being gradually toned down, and it is evident that we are approaching a period when outre modes of all kinds will be conspicuous by their absence, and good taste and good sense will preside together over feminine fashions.

As neither of these excellent qualities preclude the use of beautiful and costly fabrics, nor the adoption of new and graceful styles, there is abundant scope for the talents of couturieres and modistes, for the rules that apply to costumes apply also to chapeaux, the tall crests of which are to be lowered, not suddenly, but by degrees, in obedience to these new dictates of fashion.

Capotes are very small, and fit closely to the head; the best models are made of velvet, of plain plush, and of a number of fancy plushes, extremely pretty in effect, but difficult to describe.

A typical model is a capote of brick red plush, the upright crown and straight brim resting on the hair in front are covered with this material, which is regularly striped with twisted strings of finely cut jet beads, covering the join between the crown and brim. The strings are purl-edged faille ribbon, which start from the back, where they are fastened in by a handsome jet comb. Above the comb a drapery of plush partly overshadows the crown, and a small plume of feathers ornaments the right side.

Another very pretty model is in royal blue velvet; the flat crown is covered with a fan pleating of the velvet ending under a plain diadem-shaped brim, and in front of this a bouillonne brim of velvet which rests on the hair, the diadem forming a very becoming background. The strings of purl-edged satin ribbon start from under a little bow at the foot of the fan; a bow is placed in front of the diadem a little to the left, and on the right side of the front is a maize-colored plume and aigrette.

Capotes of fancy plush are made in similar styles to these, and are also trimmed with ribbon and feathers; unhappily many birds are worn, but a great many modistes, in compliance with the wishes of their clientele, substitute fancy feather ornaments for these poor little slaughtered innocents, and their chapeaux do not suffer in elegance by this respect for a commendable scruple.

Hats are made of the same material as bonnets, either stretched on the frame or draped; these are generally made with high crowns and narrow or wide brims turned up, bent, and twisted into various shapes.

Felt hats are of two kinds; there is first the high-crowned hat with a narrow brim, straight or raised on one side, and either lined with velvet or else of felt in a different color from the crown; thus a beige felt hat may have the under side of the brim in dark brown, or a dark hat may have the brim lined with a lighter shade. In either case these hats are both becoming and elegant.

A good model of a high-crowned felt hat is in beige, the under side of the brim, which is turned up in a long rounded point on the left, being a bright chestnut-brown color.

A band of brown velvet to match encircles the crown, and on the left side, just in front of the turned-up brim, is a fan pleating of richly embroidered corn gauze, with a small plume of peacock feathers, and gold aigrette a little further back.

The other type of felt hat is the low crowned Spanish bolero, which is made in all colors and trimmed in a great many ways.

A useful hat of this shape, which may be worn with a variety of costumes, is of beige felt, with the raised brim covered with brown velvet. A band of beige faille ribbon is folded around the crown, and far back on the left side a little crowd of bows fall over the crown; a fancy bird with a long tail is placed a little to the front of the bows, and completes the trimming.

The colors that are also most fashionable for dresses are those chiefly adopted for chapeaux, hence, charming models are made in heliotrope and antique violet, in gray, in blue, and in serpent green.

In costumes the combination of richness of material and sobriety of style produces very happy results. A stylish costume is made as follows:

The skirt is of plaid plush in shades of heliotrope; the tunic of heliotrope silk leaves the whole of the skirt exposed on the left side, where the tablier is draped with fine pleats at the waist; the back falls in straight folds at the side of the puffed centre.

The corsage is of plain dark heliotrope plush, and has a long square basque ornamented with a row of three large buttons on the left side, covering the top of the skirt; the front is slightly pointed, and a finely pleated plastron of white silk muslin ends in a sharp point at the waist. A plain white collar completes the costume.

A very elegant evening reception toilette is made thus: The skirt is of white silk muslin with bands of colored embroidery; the tunic is also of white silk muslin, but embroidered in white only; one side of the back is draped like a hood, the other side forms a wide box-pleat, the front and sides are crossed and draped in a rather intricate but very graceful fashion.

A corselet bodice is laced in front over a silk corsage, and ornamented with fichu draperies of the colored embroidery brought from the shoulders and ending under the top of the corselet. The collar and bands on the sleeves are also of the colored embroidery.

Another one is made of pale heliotrope silk, trimmed with velvet in a darker shade of the same fashionable color. The foundation skirt is covered with very slightly gathered flounces pinked out at the edge. The tunic takes the shape of two long pointed paniers bordered with ribbon velvet and puffed on the hips; velvet bows fall from the panier points, and the back drapery is bordered and caught up with velvet bows to correspond.

The corsage opens with velvet revers over a finely pleated plastron of pale heliotrope silk gauze, the revers terminating at the point of the corsage in long loops and ends of velvet.

The chapeau to match is of beaded gauze, trimmed with gauze and dark heliotrope velvet.

Many of the most fashionable and beautiful materials are in such large designs, or of such a character, that they require special styles of making, they are altogether unadapted for ordinary models.

Thus one instance is a plain woolen material accompanied by a silk and woolen fabric in shades of the same color, or in different colors, in a very large pattern of Oriental palms.

This figured material, which is in thick ottoman ribs, is employed for a very panel covering the left side of the skirt, but starting almost from the centre of the front; the draperies and corsage are of the plain fabric only.

In another woolen material the design consists of broad stripes, formed of half-inch wide bands of plush in another color connected by raised silk cable cords to match; this is used for the whole of the skirt, or for the front and side only, the parts exposed by the long open tunic of plain material to correspond.

The short jacket opens over a waistcoat of the same, and this again opens at the neck over a small gathered plastron of surah matching the stripe.

The striped materials made up in this way are varied and beautiful, and are to be seen in many colors, although antique violet, a rather dull shade of plum, and serpent green, a dark yellow green, are undoubtedly the most fashionable shades.

The striped material is invariably accompanied by plain material to match, but the word plain applies to the color only, fancy weaving of many kinds being introduced into these novelties.

As to the variety in the stripes they are endless, but raised cables and cord lines, spots, lines, and twisted cables in plush, knotted silk cords, and embroidery in fine beads, are the prevailing styles.

One pretty design is of lines of silk cable, in two colors, merging into plush spots to match at intervals of less than an inch.

Another has stripes of bead embroidery worked with small round beads outlined by woolen cords with plush cable at wider intervals.

Silk cables on a ribbed silk ground to match, in stripes of varying width, form a very effective pattern on a wool ground in another and darker color.

A rich black Sicilienne dress, just from Paris, seen in a leading city establishment, suited to either morning or dinner wear, as well as to the theatre. It had two single pleats at the side heavily jetted, the panel between being covered with chains of the finest jet. The silk had stripes of moire as wide as a sash, and in draping, these were skilfully caught together here and there to show off its richness.

Odds and Ends.

I lately saw in a fancy work establishment crochet couching work, which is a novelty, and is most suitable for articles with large, bold designs, such as mantel borders, curtain strips, chair and sofa covers, and even tea cosies.

It consists of crochet chain work done with double tapestry wools, afterwards couched round the flowers or other parts of the pattern. The filling in is done with the wool single and in crewel stitch.

A handsome sofa cushion of a novel form was in the shape of a common sack, the neck tied up with cord and pompons, showing a frill of fully two inches, lined with a contrasting color.

The part of the cushion that was stuffed was about 18x22 inches, with bands of plush from the upper left left-hand corner to the lower right-hand corner. The remainder was embroidered satin, and a corner piece was turned back over the plush, which could be turned up when being leant against to save the work from being soiled.

An elbow cushion was made in melon-shaped sections either of all satin or alternate satin and plush, the former being embroidered. It much resembled a football, but, being only partly stuffed, was nice and soft for those who indulge in such luxuries.

A very ingenious idea was the using of the frames of small garden chairs as work-bags, the seat being taken out, and only a strong band from side to side of the wood all around; from this a deep sort of bag was sewn, leaving a lined frill above to draw in with cord or ribbon at the neck like a sack.

The back of the chair was also made into a pocket to match, gathered in like a bed-pocket with an elastic. Those I saw were made of sateen or cretonne of almost every color and pattern, but could also be made of any material. It struck me that this would be a very ingenious way of using up old chairs of this sort providing the frame was entire. They could be painted any color or gilded.

Crushed morocco is another novel fabric, and is used with good effect for glove and handkerchief boxes. One handsome glove box, in dark brown crushed morocco, looks well with nickle fastenings and a lining of olive-green brocho satin.

The same materials are also employed for purses, and for card and cigarette cases.

Wall pockets abound, in a variety of shapes, some of them closely resembling the old sugar-bag twists, in which sweet-stuff was sold, with the more classical title of "Cornucopiæ."

These pockets then may be had covered with plush of every conceivable shade, edged with a bordering of tinsel lace, and tied up into a number of quaintly fantastic shapes with smart little bows of colored ribbon.

Some of the more imposing of these wall-pockets are lined with full folds of satin, and brightened by a border of tinsel thread. These, of course, are only suitable for the drawing room or the boudoir.

Mantel-borders in all the newest tapestry patterns are made in many different widths, and the subdued colorings are pleasant lighted up with threads of gold.

Among some of the wonderfully inexpensive photo frames must be mentioned those at a quarter each, in stamped leather, with borders of delicate imitation porcelain.

Equally inexpensive, too, are the blotting-books and writing cases made in leather, and tastefully decorated with paintings of contrasting color.

Jardinieres and baskets of plaited rush are made this season in a variety of harmonious coloring. Another improvement consists in the fact that useful tin flower-pots are placed inside these baskets in such a way as to render them of practical use.

Dainty little tortoise-shell combs for the hair, in an immense variety of shape, color, and design, may be obtained, and, as they have found such universal favor with the fair Parisiennes, it is safe to prophesy their popularity here.

They are simply invaluable for keeping in place the high-crowned bonnets now so common. Some are made in tortoise-shell with bright steel tops, elaborately carved. Others have similar tops in fine jet, while some, again, are made with an effective mixture of tortoise-shell and steel.

Some of the latest fancy muffs of every kind from Paris are simply perfect, with their folds of soft velvet bordered with fur and ornamented with upright bows of ribbon, or perhaps a cluster of grey and white wings. The neat little three-cornered plush pin-cushions also deserve a word of praise. Made in ruby plush decorated with holly and tinsel thread, they are arranged with straps of crimson ribbon, so that they may easily hang upon the toilet table or in a convenient corner against the wall. As to the work-baskets in many-coloured plaited rush they simply defy description.

Bertie: "It's very wrong, ma, to tell falsehoods isn't it?" Mater: "Of course it is, dear." Bertie. "And it's wicked to ask a little boy to tell lies?" Mater; "Why, yes!" Bertie, "Well that's what my teacher made me do to-day." Mater: "Gracious me—made you tell a lie, Bertie?" Bertie: "Yes; she made me promise always to be a good boy in the future."

A WISE man's heart is like a broad hearth that keeps the coals (his passions) from burning the house. Good deeds in his life are coals raked up in embers, to make a fire next day.

INTENSE thirst is satisfied by wading in the water, or by keeping the clothing saturated with water, even if it is taken from the sea.

SOME dairymen save the last fourth of the milk from the cow in a separate vessel, and pour it directly into a cream jar.

Confidential Correspondents.

R. R.—A person is not bound to support his step-mother.

O. T. T.—The English race at Epsom called the Oaks was founded in 1779 by the twelfth Earl of Derby, who owned an estate in the neighborhood called the Lambert's Oaks.

BESSIE B.—If a gentleman with whom you are unacquainted has the rudeness to speak to you in the street, pass on your way without seeming to take the slightest notice of him.

I. W.—There are innocent practical jokes which intimate friends can safely indulge in among themselves, but great discretion is needed as to when and under what circumstances it will do to give way to the indulgence.

READER.—Inlaying in gold and silver on gun-barrels is done by etching the design with acid and undercutting the edges with a graver, then hammering the soft gold or silver into the design and dressing the surface with file and polisher.

PART.—"Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest," occurs in Job, third chapter and seventeenth verse. There is a slight inaccuracy in your quotation of the passage. The correct wording of it is: "There the wicked cease from trembling, there the weary be at rest."

MAUD.—Neither arsenic nor any preparation of it should be taken unless under medical advice. It is a mineral poison of a most dangerous corrosive and subtle kind. Taken even in small doses frequently it will produce a species of ophthalmia. Swiss girls are said take it to whiten their complexions, but if they do it is at the risk of their lives.

L. M.—Remember that, when a woman takes to alcoholism, it is a hundred times harder to cure her than to cure a man. Begin at once with remedial measures, or you are lost. You will become an object of loathing to yourself. A bright cultured girl like you should now be entering on life with a joyous heart, and we feel sure that your career may yet be a happy one.

GIGLAMPS.—We have never heard of the use of lemon as a remedy for blackheads, and greatly doubt whether it would answer. Our own idea is that they are often caused by washing in hard water, the fat glands being plugged by the insoluble lime soaps which such water always produces; hence alkaline washes and good soaps used with soft water are, we think, the proper remedy.

LONELY.—If the poor fellow snatches time to read at meal-times, for mercy's sake do not check him. He is hungering after mental stimulus, and he seizes scanty moments in the intervals of hard toil. Cheer him up, pet him, coax him in every way open to you, and feten him his book when you see he is hankering after it. Perhaps in a short time your charm may overcome the charm of the book.

FORSAKEN.—You confess that it is entirely through your own fault you have lost your suitors at different times, because you are a flirt and a coquette; and you inquire what you are to do. We can only advise you to become as steady as possible, and strive your best to redeem your character from the imputations of giddiness, fickleness, and levity, which always attach themselves to young females who flirt.

BATH S.—If you imagine that your precious science of astrology is not exploded, we advise you to try selling horoscopes to ignorant people; then see what the law will say to you through the mouth of the nearest magistrate. Do you imagine that any one but a fool believes that enormous masses of matter—vast suns—moving according to fixed laws are likely to effect the fate of trivial mortals who dwell on such a tiny bulb of half-cooled matter as is our earth?

VIXEN.—As you have doubtless seen, we argued the matter out in a good-humored way. We wished to warn those unwise girls who mistake the natural courtesies of well-bred men for the manifestations of the deeper and more tender feelings which lead to direct proposals. A good-hearted and well-trained man cannot be anything but chivalrous and pleasant to all ladies, but his gentle and good-natured efforts to please should not be set down to the influence of supreme and overmastering passion.

P. G. F.—Two councils of the Christian Church were held at Nicæa, in Bithynia; one in A.D. 325, and the other in 787, but neither council concerned itself with the canon of the Scriptures. The Council of Laodicea, which met in 363, gave a list of the books of the Old and New Testaments, almost identical with that which is accepted at present. The Suras, which form the Koran, were given forth by Mohammed, during the last twenty-three years of his life, and were collected and arranged in their present form about the year 651 of our era—that is, less than twenty years after the death of the prophet.

LESLIE.—From what we know of Colorado, we should say that the climate cannot be matched in the whole world. It is dry without being enervating, and the atmosphere of the plains is so pure and free from moisture that the wounded lungs of consumptive patients soon heal. As in other States, the districts vary. You do not say where you are going. If you land in an ordinary city, you will find that the life is not like that of your own place. But human nature is much the same all the world over, and you will soon pick out good and cultivated people. If we had to choose a place in which to end our days amid perfect beauty and congenial surroundings, we should take Denver city for choice. You may have different views and tastes.

KEY-NOTE.—At your age separation from her you think you love, is not likely to kill you. Supposing you took her at her word and discontinued your attentions, after the first few weeks, you might hardly think of her, more particularly if you engaged closely in business to take your mind off the matter. You, with your evident good traits of character, (apart from the freethinking, and that we condemn as abominable) and fair worldly prospects, would hardly be long without finding some lady as much or more to your taste than the one in question. We do not approve of mixed marriages under any circumstances, and unless you adopted her faith—for it would be a miracle if she changed hers—happiness could hardly result from such a union. Altogether then, we think you would do well in giving her up. It is just possible indeed, that her objection on religious grounds may be but part of a plan to make you more interested in her, and bind yourself irrevocably.